Surfoyer Royal. 1827
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WOODSTOCK;

OR,

THE CAVALIER.

A TALE

OF THE

YEAR SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-ONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY,
TALES OF THE CRUSADERS," &c.

He was a very perfect gentle Knight.
CHAUCER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

It is not my purpose to inform my readers how the manuscripts of that eminent antiquary, the Rev. J. A. Rochecliffe, D.D., came into my possession. There are many ways in which such things happen, and it is enough to say they were rescued from an unworthy fate, and that they were honestly come by. As for the authenticity of the anecdotes which I have gleaned from the writings of this excellent person, and put together with my own unrivalled facility, the name of Doctor Rochecliffe will warrant accuracy, wherever that name happens to be known.

With his history the reading part of the world are well acquainted; and we might refer the tyro to honest Anthony a Wood, who looked up to him as one of the pillars of High Church, and bestows on him an exemplary character in the *Athenæ Oxonienses*, although the Doctor was educated at Cambridge, England's other eye.

It is well known that Doctor Rochecliffe early obtained preferment in the Church, on account of the spirited share which he took in the controversy with the Puritans; and that his work, entitled *Malleus Hæresis*, was considered as a knock-down blow by all, except those who received it. It was that work which made him, at the early age of thirty, Rector of Woodstock, and which afterwards secured him a place in the Catalogue of the celebrated Century White;—and, worse than being shown up by that fanatic, among the catalogues of scandalous and malignant priests admitted

into benefices by the prelates, his opinions occasioned the loss of his living of Woodstock by the ascendency of Presbytery. He was chaplain, during most part of the Civil War, to Sir Henry Lee's regiment, levied for the service of King Charles; and it was said he engaged more than once personally in the field. At least it is certain that Doctor Rochecliffe was repeatedly in great danger, as will appear from more passages than one in the following history, which speaks of his own exploits, like Cæsar, in the third person. I suspect, however, some Presbyterian commentator has been guilty of interpolating two or three passages. The manuscript was long in possession of the Everards, a distinguished family of that persuasion.

During the Usurpation, Doctor Rochecliffe was constantly engaged in one or other of the premature attempts at a restoration of monarchy; and was accounted,

for his audacity, presence of mind, and depth of judgment, one of the greatest undertakers for the King in that busy time; with this trifling drawback, that the plots in which he busied himself were almost constantly detected. Nay, it was suspected that Cromwell himself sometimes contrived to suggest to him the intrigues in which he engaged, by which means the wily Protector made experiments on the fidelity of doubtful friends, and became well acquainted with the plots of declared enemies, which he thought it more easy to disconcert and disappoint than to punish severely.

Upon the Restoration, Doctor Rochecliffe regained his living of Woodstock, with other church preferment, and gave up polemics and political intrigues for philosophy. He was one of the constituent members of the Royal Society, and was the person through whom Charles required of that learned body solution of their curious pro-

blem, "Why, if a vessel is filled brimful of water, and a large live fish plunged into the water, nevertheless it shall not overflow the pitcher?" Doctor Rochecliffe's exposition of this phenomenon was the most ingenious and instructive of four that were given in; and it is certain the Doctor must have gained the honour of the day, but for the obstinacy of a plain, dull, country gentleman, who insisted that the experiment should be, in the first place, publicly tried. When this was done, the event showed it would have been rather rash to have adopted the facts exclusively on the royal authority; as the fish, however curiously inserted into his native element, splashed the water over the hall, and destroyed the credit of four ingenious essayists, besides a large Turkey carpet.

Doctor Rochecliffe, it would seem, died about 1685, leaving many papers behind him of various kinds, and, above all, many

valuable anecdotes of secret history, from which the following Memoirs have been extracted, on which we intend to say only a few words by way of illustration.

The existence of Rosamond's Labyrinth, mentioned in these pages, is attested by Drayton in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

"Rosamond's Labyrinth, whose ruins, together with her Well, being paved with square stones in the bottom, and also her Tower, from which the Labyrinth did run, are yet remaining, being vaults arched and walled with stone and brick, almost inextricably wound within one another, by which, if at any time her lodging were laid about by the Queen, she might easily avoid peril imminent, and, if need be, by secret issues take the air abroad, many furlongs about Woodstock, in Oxfordshire." *

* Drayton's England's Heroical Epistles, Note A, on the Epistle, Rosamond to King Henry.

It is highly probable, that a singular piece of phantasmagoria, which was certainly played off upon the Commissioners of the Long Parliament, who were sent down to dispark and destroy Woodstock, after the death of Charles I., was conducted by means of the secret passages and recesses in the ancient Labyrinth of Rosamond, around which successive Monarchs had erected a Hunting-seat or Lodge.

There is a curious account of the disturbance given to those Honourable Commissioners, inserted by Doctor Plot, in his Natural History of Oxfordshire. But as I have not the book at hand, I can only allude to the work of the celebrated Glanville upon Witches, who has extracted it as an highly accredited narrative of supernatural dealings. The beds of the Commissioners, and their servants, were hoisted up till they were almost inverted, and then let

down again so suddenly, as to menace them with broken bones. Unusual and horrible noises disturbed those sacrilegious intromitters with royal property. The devil, on one occasion, brought them a warming-pan; on another, pelted them with stones and horses' bones. Tubs of water were emptied on them in their sleep; and so many other pranks of the same nature played at their expense, that they broke up housekeeping, and left their intended spoliation only half completed. The good sense of Doctor Plot suspected, that these feats were wrought by conspiracy and confederation, which Glanville of course endeavours to refute with all his might; for it could scarce be expected, that he who believed in so convenient a solution as that of supernatural agency, would consent to relinquish the service of a key, which will answer any lock, however intricate.

Nevertheless, it was afterwards discovered, that Doctor Plot was perfectly right; and that the only demon who wrought all these marvels, was a disguised royalist—a fellow called Trusty Joe, or some such name, formerly in the service of the Keeper of the Park, but who engaged in that of the Commissioners, on purpose to subject them to his persecution. I think I have seen some account of the real state of the transaction, and of the machinery by which the wizard worked his wonders; but whether in a book, or a pamphlet, I am uncertain. I remember one passage particularly to this purpose. The Commissioners having agreed to retain some articles out of the public account, in order to be divided among themselves, had entered into an indenture for ascertaining their share in the peculation, which they hid in a bow-pot for security. Now, when an assembly of divines, aided

by the most strict religious characters in the neighbourhood of Woodstock, were assembled to conjure down the supposed demon, Trusty Joe had contrived a fire-work, which he let off in the midst of the exorcism, and which destroyed the bow-pot; and, to the shame and confusion of the Commissioners, threw their secret indenture into the midst of the assembled ghost-seers, who became thus acquainted with their schemes of peculation.

It is, however, to little purpose for me to strain my memory about ancient and imperfect recollections concerning the particulars of these fantastic disturbances at Woodstock, since Doctor Rochecliffe's papers give such a much more accurate narrative than could be obtained from any account in existence before their publication. Indeed, I might have gone much more fully into this part of my subject, for the mate-

rials are ample;—but, to tell the reader a secret, some friendly critics were of opinion they made the story hang on hand; and thus I was prevailed on to be more concise on the subject than I might otherwise have been.

The impatient reader, perhaps, is by this time accusing me of keeping the sun from him with a candle. Were the sunshine as bright, however, as it is likely to prove; and the flambeau, or link, a dozen of times as smoky, my friend must remain in the inferior atmosphere a minute longer, while I disclaim the idea of poaching on another's manor. Hawks, we say, in Scotland, ought not to pick out hawks' eyes, or tire upon each other's quarry; and, therefore, if I had known that, in its date and its characters, this tale was like to interfere with that recently published by a distinguished contemporary, I should unquestionably have left

Doctor Rochecliffe's manuscript in peace for the present season. But before I was aware of this circumstance, this little book was half through the press; and I had only the alternative of avoiding any intentional imitation, by delaying a perusal of the contemporary work in question. Some accidental collision there must be, when works of a similar character are finished on the same general system of historical manners, and the same historical personages are introduced. Of course, if such have occurred, I shall be probably the sufferer. But my intentions have been at least innocent, since I look on it as one of the advantages attending the conclusion of WOODSTOCK, that the finishing of my own task will permit me to have the pleasure of reading BRAMBLETYE-HOUSE, from which I have hitherto conscientiously abstained.

WOODSTOCK.

WOODSTOCK.

CHAPTER I.

Some were for gospel ministers,
And some for red-coat seculars,
As men most fit t' hold forth the word,
And wield the one and th' other sword.
BUTLER'S *Hudibras.*

There is a handsome parish church in the town of Woodstock,—I am told so at least, for I never saw it, having scarce time, when at the place, to view the magnificence of Blenheim, its painted halls, and tapestried bowers, and then return in due season to dine in hall with my learned friend, the provost of ——; being one of those occasions on which a man wrongs himself extremely, if he lets his curiosity interfere with his punctuality. I had the church accurately described to me, with

a view to this work; but, as I have some reason to doubt whether my informant had ever seen the inside of it himself, I will be content to say that it is now a handsome edifice, most part of which was rebuilt forty or fifty years since, although it still contains some arches of the old chantry, founded, it is said, by King John. But it is to this more ancient part of the building that my story refers.

Upon a morning in the end of September, or beginning of October, in the year 1652, being a day appointed for a solemn thanksgiving for the decisive victory at Worcester, a respectable audience was assembled in the old chantry, or chapel of King John. The condition of the church and character of the audience both bore witness to the rage of civil war, and the peculiar spirit of the times. The sacred edifice showed many marks of dilapidation. The windows, once filled with stained glass, had been dashed to pieces with pikes and muskets, as matters of and pertaining to idolatry. The carving on the reading-desk was damaged, and two fair screens of beautiful sculptured oak had been destroyed, for the same

pithy and conclusive reason. The high altar had been removed, and the gilded railing, which was once around it, was broken down and carried off. The effigies of several tombs were mutilated, and now lay scattered about the church,

> Torn from their destined niche, unworthy meed
> Of knightly counsel or heroic deed.

The autumn wind piped through empty aisles, in which the remains of stakes and trevisses of rough-hewn timber, as well as a quantity of scattered hay and trampled straw, seemed to intimate that the hallowed precincts had been, upon some late emergency, made the quarters of a troop of horse.

The audience, like the building, was abated in splendour. None of the ancient and habitual worshippers during peaceful times, were now to be seen in their carved galleries, with hands shadowing their brows, while composing their minds to pray where their fathers had prayed, and after the same mode of worship. The eye of the yeoman and peasant sought in vain the tall form of old Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley, as, wrapped in his laced cloak, and with beard and whiskers duly composed, he moved slowly through the

aisles, followed by the faithful mastiff, or bloodhound, which in old time had saved his master by his fidelity, and which regularly followed him to church. Bevis, indeed, fell under the proverb which avers, "He is a good dog which goes to church;" for, bating an occasional temptation to warble along with the accord, he behaved himself as decorously as any of the congregation, and returned as much edified, perhaps, as some of them. The damsels of Woodstock looked as vainly for the laced cloaks, jingling spurs, slashed boots, and tall plumes, of the young cavaliers of this and other high-born houses, moving through the streets and the church-yard with the careless ease, which indicates perhaps rather an overweening degree of self-confidence, yet shows graceful when mingled with good humour and courtesy. The good old dames, too, in their white hoods and black velvet gowns—their daughters, "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes,"—where were they all now, who, when they entered the church, used to divide men's thoughts between them and Heaven? "But, ah! Alice Lee—so sweet, so gentle, so condescending in thy

loveliness—[thus proceeds a contemporary annalist, whose manuscript we have deciphered] —why is my story to turn upon thy fallen fortunes? and why not rather to the period when, in the very dismounting from your palfrey, you attracted as many eyes as if an angel had descended,—as many blessings as if the benignant being had come fraught with good tidings? No creature wert thou of an idle romancer's imagination—no being fantastically bedizened with inconsistent perfections;—thy merits made me love thee well—and for thy faults—I think they made me love thee better."

With the house of Lee had disappeared from the chantry of King John others of gentle blood and honoured lineage,—Freemantles, Winklecombes, Drycotts, &c.; for the air that blew over the towers of Oxford was unfavourable to the growth of Puritanism, which was more general in the neighbouring counties. There were among the congregation, however, one or two that, by their habits and demeanour, seemed country gentlemen of consideration, and there were also present some of the notables of the town of Woodstock, cutlers or glovers chiefly, whose skill in

steel or leather had raised them to a comfortable livelihood. These dignitaries wore long black cloaks, plaited close at the neck, and, like peaceful citizens, carried their Bibles and memorandum-books at their girdles, instead of knife or sword. This respectable, but least numerous part of the audience, were such decent persons as had adopted the Presbyterian form of faith, renouncing the liturgy and hierarchy of the Church of England, and living under the tuition of the Rev. Nehemiah Holdenough, much famed for the length and strength of his powers of predication. With these grave seniors sate their goodly dames in ruff and gorget, like the portraits which in catalogues of paintings are designed "wife of a burgo-master;" and their pretty daughters, whose study, like that of Chaucer's physician, was not always in the Bible, but who were, on the contrary, when a glance could escape the vigilance of their honoured mothers, inattentive themselves, and the cause of inattention in others.

But, besides these dignified persons, there were in the church a numerous collection of the lower orders, some brought thither by curiosity, but many of them unwashed artificers, be-

wildered in the theological discussions of the time, and of as many various sects as there are colours in the rainbow. The presumption of these learned Thebans being in exact proportion to their ignorance, the last was total, and the first boundless. Their behaviour in the church was anything but reverential or edifying. Most of them affected a cynical contempt for all that was only held sacred by human sanction—the church was to these men but a steeple-house, the clergyman, an ordinary person; her ordinances, dry bran and sapless pottage, unfitted for the spiritualized palates of the saints, and the prayer, an address to Heaven, to which each acceded or not, as in his too critical judgment he conceived fit.

The elder amongst them sate or lay on the benches, with their high steeple-crowned hats pulled over their severe and knitted brows, waiting for the Presbyterian parson, as mastiffs sit in dumb expectation of the bull that is to be brought to the stake. The younger mixed, some of them, a bolder licence of manners with their heresies; they gazed round on the women, yawned, coughed, and whispered, eat apples and crack-

ed nuts, as if in the gallery of a theatre ere the piece commences.

Besides all these, the congregation contained a few soldiers, some in corslets and steel caps, some in buff, and others in red coats. These men of war had their bandeliers, with ammunition, slung round them, and rested on their pikes and muskets. They, too, had their peculiar doctrines on the most difficult points of religion, and united the extravagances of enthusiasm with the most determined courage and resolution in the field. The burghers of Woodstock looked on these military saints with no small degree of awe; for though not often sullied with deeds of plunder or cruelty, they had the power of both absolutely in their hands, and the peaceful citizens had no alternative, save submission to whatever the ill-regulated and enthusiastic imaginations of their martial guides might suggest.

After some time spent in waiting for him, Mr Holdenough began to walk up the aisles of the chapel, not with the slow and dignified carriage with which the old Rector was of yore wont to maintain the dignity of the surplice, but with a

hasty step, like one who arrives too late at an appointment, and bustles forward to make the best use of his time. He was a tall thin man, with an adust complexion, and the vivacity of his eye indicated some irascibility of temperament. His dress was brown, not black, and over his other vestments he wore, in honour of Calvin, a Geneva cloak of a blue colour, which fell backward from his shoulders as he posted on to the pulpit. His grizzled hair was cut as short as shears could perform the feat, and covered with a black silk skull-cap, which stuck so close to his head, that the two ears expanded from under it as if they had been intended as handles by which to lift the whole person. Moreover the worthy divine wore spectacles, and a long grizzled peaked beard, and he carried in his hand a small pocket-bible with silver clasps. Upon arriving at the pulpit, he paused a moment to take breath, then began to ascend the steps by two at a time.

But his course was arrested by a strong hand, which seized his cloak. It was that of one who had detached himself from the group of soldiery. He was a stout man of middle stature, with a

quick eye, and a countenance which, though plain, had yet an expression that fixed the attention. His dress, though not strictly military, partook of that character. He wore large hose made of calves-leather, and a tuck, as it was then called, or rapier, of tremendous length, balanced on the other side by a dagger. The belt was morocco, garnished with pistols.

The minister, thus intercepted in his duty, faced round upon the party who had seized him, and demanded in no gentle tone the meaning of the interruption.

"Friend," quoth the intruder, "is it thy purpose to hold forth to these good people?"

"Ay, marry is it," said the clergyman, "and such is my bounden duty. Woe to me if I preach not the gospel—Prithee, friend, let me not in my labour."

"Nay," said the man of warlike mien, "I am myself minded to hold forth; therefore, do thou desist, or if thou wilt do by mine advice, remain and fructify with those poor goslings, to whom I am presently about to shake forth the crumbs of comfortable doctrine."

"Give place, thou man of Satan," said the priest, waxing wroth, "respect mine order—my cloth."

"I see no more to respect in the cut of thy cloak, or in the cloth of which it is fashioned," said the other, "than thou didst in the Bishop's rocket—they were black and white, thou art blue and brown. Sleeping dogs every one of you, lying down, loving to slumber—shepherds that starve the flock, but will not watch it, each looking to his own gain—hum."

Scenes of this indecent kind were so common at the time, that no one thought of interfering; the congregation looked on in silence, the better class scandalized, and the lower orders, some laughing, and others backing the soldier or minister as their fancy dictated. Meantime the struggle waxed fiercer; Mr Holdenough clamoured for assistance.

"Mr Mayor of Woodstock," he exclaimed, "wilt thou be among those wicked magistrates who bear the sword in vain?—Citizens, will you not help your pastor?—Worthy Aldermen, will you see me strangled on the pulpit stairs by this

man of buff and Belial?—But lo, I will overcome him, and cast his cords from me."

As Holdenough spoke, he struggled to ascend the pulpit stairs, holding hard on the bannisters. His tormentor held fast by the skirts of the cloak, which went nigh to the choking of the wearer, until, as he spoke the words last mentioned, in a half-strangled voice, Mr Holdenough dexterously slipped the string which tied it round his neck, so that the garment suddenly gave way; the soldier fell backwards down the steps, and the liberated divine skipped into his pulpit, and began to give forth a psalm of triumph over his prostrate adversary. But a great hubbub in the church marred his triumph, and although he and his faithful clerk continued to sing the hymn of victory, their notes were only heard by fits, like the whistle of a curlieu during a gale of wind.

The cause of the tumult was as follows:—The Mayor was a zealous Presbyterian, and witnessed the intrusion of the soldier with great indignation from the very beginning, though he hesitated to interfere with an armed man while on his legs and

capable of resistance. But no sooner did he behold the champion of independency sprawling on his back, with the divine's Geneva cloak fluttering in his hands, than the magistrate rushed forward, exclaiming that such insolence was not to be endured, and ordered his constables to seize the prostrate champion, proclaiming, in the magnanimity of wrath, "I will commit every red-coat of them all—I will commit him were he Noll Cromwell himself."

The worthy Mayor's indignation had overmastered his reason when he made this mistimed vaunt; for three soldiers, who had hitherto stood motionless like statues, made each a stride in advance, which placed them betwixt the municipal officers and the soldier who was in the act of arising; then making at once the movement of resting arms according to the manual as then practised, their musket-butts rang on the church pavement, within an inch of the gouty toes of Master Mayor. The energetic magistrate, whose efforts in favour of order were thus checked, cast one glance on his supporters, but that was enough to show him that force was not on his side. All had shrunk back on hearing that ominous clatter

of stone and iron. He was obliged to descend to expostulation.

"What do you mean, my masters?" said he; "is it like a decent and God-fearing soldiery, who have wrought such things for the land as have never before been heard of, to brawl and riot in the church, or to aid, abet, and comfort a profane fellow, who hath, upon a solemn thanksgiving, excluded the minister from his own pulpit?"

"We have nought to do with thy church, as thou call'st it," said he who by a small feather in front of his morion appeared to be the corporal of the party;—"we see not why men of gifts should not be heard within these citadels of superstition, as well as the voice of the men of crape of old, and the men of cloak now. Wherefore we will pluck yon Jack Presbyter out of his wooden sentinel-box, and our own watchman shall relieve the guard, and mount thereon and cry aloud and spare not."

"Nay, gentlemen," said the Mayor, "if such be your purpose, we have not the means to withstand you, being, as you see, peaceful and quiet

men—But let me first speak with this worthy minister, Nehemiah Holdenough, to persuade him to yield up his place for the time without farther scandal."

The peace-making Mayor then interrupted the quavering of Holdenough and the clerk, and prayed both to retire, else there would, he said, be certainly strife.

"Strife?" replied the Presbyterian divine, with scorn; "no fear of strife, among men that dare not testify against this open profanation of the church, and daring display of heresy. Would your neighbours of Banbury have brooked such an insult?"

"Come, come, Mr Holdenough," said the Mayor, "put us not to mutiny and cry Clubs. I tell you once more, we are not men of war or blood."

"Not more than may be drawn by the point of a needle," said the preacher, scornfully.—"Ye tailors of Woodstock,—for what is a glover but a tailor working on kidskin?—I forsake you, in scorn of your faint hearts and feeble hands, and will seek me elsewhere a flock which will not fly

from their shepherd at the braying of the first wild ass which cometh from out the great desert."

So saying, the aggrieved divine departed from his pulpit, and shaking the dust from his shoes, left the church as hastily as he had entered it, though for a different reason. The citizens saw his retreat with sorrow, and not without a compunctious feeling as if they were not playing the most courageous part in the world. The Mayor himself and several others left the church, to follow and appease him.

The Independent orator, late prostrate, was now triumphant, and inducting himself into the pulpit without farther ceremony, he pulled a Bible from his pocket, and selected his text from the forty-fifth psalm,—"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty: and in thy majesty ride prosperously."—Upon this theme he commenced one of those wild declamations common at the period, in which men were accustomed to wrest and pervert the language of scripture, by adapting it to modern events. The language which, in its literal sense, was applied to King David,

and typically referred to the coming of the Messiah, was, in the opinion of the military orator, most properly to be interpreted of Oliver Cromwell, the victorious general of the infant Commonwealth, which was never destined to come of age. "Gird on thy sword!" exclaimed the preacher emphatically; "and was not that a pretty bit of steel as ever dangled from a corslet, or rung against a steel saddle? Ay, ye prick up your ears now, ye cutlers of Woodstock, as if ye should know something of a good fox broad-sword—Did you forge it, I trow?—was the steel quenched with water from Rosamond's well, or the blade blessed by the old cuckoldly-priest of Godstow? You would have us think, I warrant me, that you wrought it and welded it, grinded and polished it, and all the while it never came on a Woodstock stithy. You were all too busy making whittles for the lazy crape-men of Oxford, bouncing priests, whose eyes were so closed up with fat, that they could not see Destruction till she had them by the throat. But I can tell you where the sword was forged, and tempered, and welded, and grinded, and

polished. When you were, as I said before, making whittles for false priests, and daggers for dissolute G—d d—n-me cavaliers, to cut the people of England's throat with—it was forged at Long Marston Moor, where blows went faster than ever rung hammer on anvil—and it was tempered at Naseby, in the best blood of the cavaliers—and it was welded in Ireland against the walls of Drogheda—and it was grinded on Scottish lives at Dunbar—and now of late it was polished in Worcester, till it shines as bright as the sun in the middle heaven, and there is no light in England that shall come nigh unto it."

Here the military part of the congregation raised a hum of approbation, which being a sound like the "hear, hear," of the British House of Commons, was calculated to heighten the enthusiasm of the orator, by intimating the sympathy of the audience. "And then," resumed the preacher, rising in energy as he found that his audience partook in these feelings, "what sayeth the text?—Ride on prosperously—do not stop—do not call a halt—do not quit the saddle—pursue the scattered fliers—sound the trumpet—not

a levant or a flourish, but a point of war—sound, boot and saddle—to horse and away—a charge! —follow after the young Man!—what part have we in him?—Slay, take, destroy, divide the spoil! Blessed art thou, Oliver, on account of thine honour—thy cause is clear, thy call is undoubted—never has defeat come near thy leading staff, nor disaster attended thy banner. Ride on, flower of England's soldiers! ride on, chosen leader of God's champions! gird up the loins of thy resolution, and be steadfast to the mark of thy high calling!"

Another deep and stern hum, echoed by the ancient embow'd arches of the old chantry, gave him an opportunity of an instant's repose; when the people of Woodstock heard him, and not without anxiety, turn the stream of his oratory into another channel.

"But wherefore, ye people of Woodstock, do I say these things to you, who claim no portion in our David, no interest in England's son of Jesse?—You, who were fighting as well as your might could (and it was not very formidable) for the late Man, under that old blood-thirsty pa-

pist Sir Jacob Aston—are you not now plotting, or ready to plot, for restoring, as ye call it, of the young Man, the unclean son of the slaughtered tyrant—the fugitive after whom the true hearts of England are now following, that they may take and slay him?—'Why should your rider turn his bridle our way?' say you in your hearts; 'we will none of him; if we may help ourselves, we will rather turn us to wallow in the mire of monarchy, with the sow that was washed but newly.' Come, men of Woodstock, I will ask, and do you answer me. Hunger ye still after the flesh-pots of the monks of Godstow? and ye will say, Nay;—but wherefore, except that the pots are cracked and broken, and the fire is extinguished wherewith thy oven used to boil? And again, I ask, drink ye still of the well of the fornications of the fair Rosamond?—ye will say Nay;—but wherefore?"—

Here the orator, ere he could answer the question in his own way, was surprised by the following reply, very pithily pronounced by one of the congregation:—"Because you, and the like of you, have left us no brandy to mix with it."

All eyes turned to the audacious speaker, who stood beside one of the thick sturdy Saxon pillars, which he himself somewhat resembled, being short of stature, but very strongly made, a squat broad Little-John sort of figure, leaning on a quarter-staff, and wearing a jerkin, which, though now sorely stained and discoloured, had once been of the Lincoln green, and showed remnants of having been laced. There was an air of careless good-humoured audacity about the fellow; and, though under military restraint, there were some of the citizens who could not help crying out,—"Well said, Joceline Joliffe."

"Jolly Joceline, call ye him?" proceeded the preacher, without showing either confusion or displeasure at the interruption,—"I will make him Joceline of the jail, if he interrupts me again. One of your park-keepers, I warrant, that can never forget they have borne C. R. upon their badges and bugle-horns, even as a dog bears his owner's name on his collar—a pretty emblem for Christian men! But the brute beast hath the better of him,—the brute weareth his own coat, and the caitiff thrall wears his master's. I have

seen such a wag make a rope's end wag ere now. —Where was I?—Oh, rebuking you for your backslidings, men of Woodstock.—Yes, then ye will say ye have renounced Popery, and ye have renounced Prelacy, and then ye wipe your mouth like Pharisees as ye are; and who but you for purity of religion! But I tell you, ye are but like Jehu the son of Nimshi, who broke down the house of Baal, yet departed not from the sons of Jeroboam. Even so ye eat not fish on Friday with the blinded Papists, nor minced-pies on the twenty-fifth day of December, like the slothful Prelatists; but ye will gorge on sack-posset each night in the year with your blind Presbyterian guide, and ye will speak evil of dignities, and revile the Commonwealth; and ye will glorify yourselves in your park of Woodstock, and say, 'Was it not walled in first of any other in England, and that by Henry son of William called the Conqueror?' And ye have a princely Lodge therein, and call the same a Royal Lodge; and ye have an oak which ye call the King's Oak; and ye steal and eat the venison of the park; and ye say, 'This is the king's venison, we will wash it

down with a cup to the king's health—better we eat it than those round-headed commonwealth knaves.' But listen unto me, and take warning. For these things come we to controversy with you. And our name shall be a cannon-shot, before which your Lodge, in the pleasantness whereof ye take pastime, shall be blown into ruins; and we will be as a wedge to split asunder the King's Oak into billets to heat a brown baker's oven; and we will dispark your park, and slay your deer, and eat them ourselves, neither shall you have any portion thereof, whether in neck or haunch. Ye shall not haft a ten-penny knife with the horns thereof, neither shall ye cut a pair of breeches out of the hide, for all ye be cutlers and glovers; and ye shall have no comfort or support neither from the sequestrated traitor Henry Lee, who called himself Ranger of Woodstock, nor from any on his behalf; for they are coming hither who shall be called Maher-shalal-hash-baz, because he maketh haste to the spoil."

Here ended this wild effusion, the latter part of which fell heavy on the souls of the poor citi-

zens of Woodstock, as tending to confirm a report of an unpleasing nature which had been lately circulated. The communication with London was indeed slow, and the news which it transmitted were uncertain; no less uncertain were the times themselves, and the rumours which were circulated, exaggerated by the hopes and fears of so many various factions. But the general stream of report, so far as Woodstock was concerned, had of late run uniformly in one direction. Day after day they had been informed, that the fatal fiat of Parliament had gone out, for selling the Park of Woodstock, destroying its lodge, disparking its forest, and erazing, as far as they could be erazed, all traces of its ancient fame. Many of the citizens were likely to be sufferers on this occasion, as several of them enjoyed, either by sufferance or right, various convenient privileges of pasturage, cutting fire-wood, and the like, in the royal chase; and all the inhabitants of the little borough were hurt to think, that the scenery of the place was to be destroyed, its edifices ruined, and its honours rent away. This is a patriotic sensation often found in such places, which

ancient distinctions and long-cherished recollections of former days, render so different from towns of recent date. The natives of Woodstock felt it in the fullest force. They had trembled at the anticipated calamity; but now, when it was announced by the appearance of those dark, stern, and at the same time omnipotent soldiers—now that they heard it proclaimed by the mouth of one of their military preachers—they considered their fate as inevitable. The causes of disagreement among themselves were for the time forgotten, as the congregation, dismissed without psalmody or benediction, went slowly and mournfully homeward, each to his own place of abode.

CHAPTER II.

Come forth, old man—Thy daughter's side
Is now the fitting place for thee:
When Time hath quell'd the oak's bold pride,
The youthful tendril yet may hide
The ruins of the parent tree.

When the sermon was ended, the military orator wiped his brow; for, notwithstanding the coolness of the weather, he was heated with the vehemence of his speech and action. He then descended from the pulpit, and spoke a word or two to the corporal who commanded the party of soldiers, who, replying by a sober nod of intelligence, drew his men together, and marched them in order to their quarters in the town.

The preacher himself, as if nothing extraordinary had happened, left the church and sauntered through the streets of Woodstock, with the air of a stranger who was viewing the town, with-

out seeming to observe that he was himself in his turn anxiously surveyed by the citizens, whose furtive yet frequent glances seemed to regard him as something alike suspected and dreadful, yet on no account to be provoked. He heeded them not, but stalked on in the manner affected by the distinguished fanatics of the day; a stiff solemn pace, a severe and at the same time a contemplative look, like that of a man incensed at the interruptions which earthly objects forced upon him, obliging him by their intrusion to withdraw his thoughts for an instant from celestial things. Innocent pleasures of what kind soever they held in suspicion and contempt, and innocent mirth they abominated. It was, however, a cast of mind that formed men for great and manly action, as it adopted principle, and that of an unselfish character, for the ruling motive, instead of the gratification of passion. Some of these men were indeed hypocrites, using the cloak of religion only as a covering for their ambition; but many really possessed the devotional character, and the severe republican virtue, which others only affected. By far the greater number hovered between these

extremes, felt to a certain extent the power of religion, and complied with the times in affecting a great deal.

The individual, whose pretensions to sanctity, written as they were upon his brow and gait, have given rise to the above digression, reached at length the extremity of the principal street, which terminates upon the park of Woodstock. A battlemented portal of Gothic appearance defended the entrance to the avenue. It was of mixed architecture, but on the whole, though composed of the styles of different ages, when it had received additions, had a striking and imposing effect. An immense gate composed of rails of hammered iron, with many a flourish and scroll, displaying as its uppermost ornament the ill-fated cypher of C. R., was now decayed, partly with rust, partly from the effects of violence.

The stranger paused, as if uncertain whether he should demand or assay entrance. He looked through the grating down an avenue skirted by majestic oaks, which led onward with a gentle curve, as if into the depths of some ample and ancient forest. The wicket of the large iron gate being

left unwittingly open, the soldier was tempted to enter, yet with some hesitation, as he that intrudes upon ground which he conjectures may be prohibited—indeed his manner showed more reverence for the scene than could have been expected from his condition and character. He slackened his stately and consequential pace, and at length stood still, and looked around him.

Not far from the gate, he saw rising from the trees one or two ancient and venerable turrets, bearing each its own vane of rare device glittering in the autumn sun. These indicated the ancient hunting seat, or Lodge, as it was called, which had, since the time of Henry II., been occasionally the residence of the English Monarchs, when it pleased them to visit the woods of Oxford, which then so abounded with game, that, according to old Fuller, huntsmen and falconers were nowhere better pleased. The situation which the Lodge occupied was a piece of flat ground, now planted with sycamores, not far from the entrance to that magnificent spot where the spectator first stops to gaze upon Blenheim, to think of Marl-

borough's victories, and to applaud or criticise the cumbrous magnificence of Vanburgh's style.

There too paused our military preacher, but with other thoughts, and for other purpose, than to admire the scene around him. It was not long afterwards when he beheld two persons, a male and a female, approaching slowly, and so deeply engaged in their own conversation that they did not raise their eyes to observe that there stood a stranger in the path before them. The soldier took advantage of their state of abstraction, and, desirous at once to watch their motions and avoid their observation, he glided beneath one of the huge trees which skirted the path, and whose boughs, sweeping the ground on every side, insured him against discovery, unless in case of an actual search.

In the meantime, the gentleman and lady continued to advance, directing their course to a rustic seat, which still enjoyed the sun-beams, and was placed adjacent to the tree where the stranger was concealed.

The man was elderly, yet seemed bent more

by sorrow and infirmity, than by the weight of years. He wore a mourning cloak, over a dress of the same melancholy colour, cut in that picturesque form, which Vandyke has rendered immortal. But although the dress was handsome, it was put on and worn with a carelessness which showed the mind of the wearer ill at ease. His aged, yet still handsome countenance, had the same air of consequence which distinguished his dress and his gait. A striking part of his appearance was a long white beard, which descended far over the breast of his slashed doublet, and looked singular from its contrast in colour with his habit.

The young lady, by whom this venerable gentleman seemed to be in some degree supported as they walked arm in arm, was a slight and sylph-like form, with a person so delicately made, and so beautiful in countenance, that it seemed the earth on which she walked was too grossly massive a support for a creature so aerial. But mortal beauty must share human sorrows. The eyes of the beautiful being showed tokens of tears; her colour was heightened as she listened to her aged

companion; and it was plain, from his melancholy yet displeased look, that the conversation was as distressing to himself as to her. When they sate down on the bench we have mentioned, the gentleman's discourse could be distinctly overheard by the eves-dropping soldier, but the answers of the young lady reached his ear rather less distinctly.

"It is not to be endured," said the old man, passionately; "it would stir up a paralytic wretch to start up a soldier. My people have been thinned, I grant you, or have fallen off from me in these times—I owe them no grudge for it, poor knaves; what should they do when the pantry has no bread and the buttery no ale? But we have still about us some rugged foresters of the old Woodstock breed—old as myself most of them—what of that? old wood seldom warps in the wetting;—I will hold out the old house, and it will not be the first time that I have held it against ten times the strength that we hear of now."

"Alas! my dear father,"—said the young lady, in a tone which seemed to intimate his proposal of defence to be altogether desperate.

"And why, alas?" said the gentleman, angrily; "is it because I shut my door on a score or two of these blood-thirsty hypocrites?"

"But their masters can as easily send a regiment or an army, if they will," replied the lady; "and what good would your present defence do, excepting to exasperate them to your utter destruction?"

"Be it so, Alice," replied her father; "I have lived my time and beyond it. I have outlived the kindest and most prince-like of masters. What do I do on the earth since the dismal thirtieth of January? The parricide of that day was a signal to all true servants of Charles Stuart to avenge his death, or die as soon after as they could find a worthy opportunity."

"Do not speak thus, sir," said Alice Lee; "it does not become your gravity and your worth to throw away that life which may yet be of service to your king and country,—it will not and cannot always be thus. England will not long endure the rulers which these bad times have assigned her. In the meanwhile—[here a few words escaped the listener's ears]—and

beware of that impatience, which makes bad worse."

"Worse?" exclaimed the impatient old man, "*What* can be worse? Is it not at the worst already? Will not these people expel us from the only shelter we have left—dilapidate what remains of royal property under my charge—make the palace of princes into a den of thieves, and then wipe their mouths and thank God, as if they had done an alms deed?"

"Still," said his daughter, "there is hope behind, and I trust the King is ere this out of their reach—We have reason to think well of my brother Albert's safety."

"Ay, Albert! there again," said the old man, in a tone of reproach; "had it not been for thy entreaties I had gone to Worcester myself; but I must needs lie here like a worthless hound when the hunt is up, when who knows what service I might have shown? An old man's head is sometimes useful when his arm is but little worth. But you and Albert were so desirous that he should go alone—and now, who can say what has become of him?"

"Nay, nay, father," said Alice, "we have good hope that Albert escaped from that fatal day; young Abney saw him a mile from the field."

"Young Abney lied, I believe," said the father, in the same humour of contradiction—"Young Abney's tongue seems quicker than his hands, but far slower than his horse's heels when he leaves the roundheads behind him. I would rather Albert's dead body were laid between Charles and Cromwell, than hear he fled as early as young Abney."

"My dearest father," said the young lady, weeping as she spoke, "what can I say to comfort you?"

"Comfort me, say'st thou, girl? I am sick of comfort—an honourable death, with the ruins of Woodstock for my monument, were the only comfort to old Henry Lee. Yes, by the memory of my father! I will make good the Lodge against these rebellious robbers."

"Yet be ruled, dearest father," said the maiden, "and submit to that which we cannot gainsay. My uncle Everard——"

Here the old man caught at her unfinished

words. "Thy uncle Everard, wench!—Well, get on.—What of thy precious and loving uncle Everard?"

"Nothing, sir," she said, "if the subject displeases you."

"Displeases me?" he replied, "why should it displease me? or, if it did, why should'st thou, or any one, affect to care about it? What is it that hath happened of late years—what is it can be thought to happen that astrologer can guess at, which can give pleasure to us?"

"Fate," she replied, "may have in store the joyful restoration of our banished prince."

"Too late for my time, Alice," said the knight; "if there be such a white page in the heavenly book, it will not be turned until long after my day.—But I see thou would'st escape me.—In a word, what of thy uncle Everard?"

"Nay, sir," said Alice, "God knows I would rather be silent for ever, than speak what might, as you would take it, add to your present distemperature."

"Distemperature!" said her father; "Oh, thou art a sweet-lipped physician, and would'st, I war-

rant me, drop nought but sweet balm, and honey, and oil, on my distemperature—if that is the phrase for an old man's ailment, when he is well nigh heart-broken.—Once more, what of thy uncle Everard ?"

His last words were uttered in a high and peevish tone of voice; and Alice Lee answered her father in a trembling and submissive tone.

"I only meant to say, sir, that I am well assured that my uncle Everard, when we quit this place——"

"That is to say, when we are kicked out of it by crop-eared canting villains like himself.—But on with thy bountiful uncle—what will he do? —will he give us the remains of his worshipful and economical house-keeping, the fragments of a thrice-sack'd capon twice a-week, and a plentiful fast on the other five days?—Will he give us beds beside his half-starved nags, and put them under a short allowance of straw, that his sister's husband—that I should have called my deceased angel by such a name!—and his sister's daughter, may not sleep on the stones? Or will he send us a noble each, with a warning to make it last, for

he had never known the ready-penny so hard to come by? Or what else will your uncle Everard do for us? Get us a furlough to beg? Why, I can do that without him."

"You misconstrue him much," answered Alice, with more spirit than she had hitherto displayed; "and would you but question your own heart, you would acknowledge—I speak with reverence—that your tongue utters what your better judgment would disown. My uncle Everard is neither a miser nor a hypocrite, neither so fond of the goods of this world that he would not supply our distresses amply, nor so wedded to fanatical opinions as to exclude charity for other sects beside his own."

"Ay, ay, the Church of England is a *sect* with him I doubt not, and perhaps with thee too, Alice," said the knight. "What is a Muggleman, or a Ranter, or a Brownist, but a sectary? and thy phrase places them all, with Jack Presbyter himself, on the same footing with our learned prelates and religious clergy! Such is the cant of the day thou livest in, and why should'st thou not talk like one of the wise virgins and psalm-

singing sisters, since, though thou hast a profane old cavalier for a father, thou art own niece to uncle Everard!"

"If you speak thus, my dear father," said Alice, "what can I answer you? Hear me but one patient word, and I shall have discharged my uncle Everard's commission."

"Oh, it is a commission then! Surely I suspected so much from the beginning—nay, have some sharp guess touching the ambassador also. —Come, madam, do your errand, and you shall have no reason to complain of my patience."

"Then, sir," replied his daughter, "my uncle Everard desires you would be courteous to the commissioners, who come here to sequestrate the parks and the property; or, at least, heedfully to abstain from giving them obstacle or opposition: it can, he says, do no good, even on your own principles, and it will give a pretext for proceeding against you as one in the worst degree of malignity, which he thinks may otherwise be prevented. Nay, he has good hope, that if you follow his counsel, the committee may, through the interest he possesses, be inclined to remove the

sequestration of your estate on a moderate fine. Thus says my uncle; and having communicated his advice, I have no occasion to urge your patience with farther argument."

"It is well thou dost not, Alice," answered Sir Henry Lee, in a tone of suppressed anger; "for, by the blessed rood, thou hast well nigh led me into the heresy of thinking thee no daughter of mine.—Ah! my beloved companion, who art now far from the sorrows and cares of this weary world, could'st thou have thought that the daughter thou didst clasp to thy bosom, would, like the wicked wife of Job, become a temptress to her father in the hour of affliction, and recommend to him to make his conscience truckle to his interest, and to beg back at the bloody hands of his master's, and perhaps his son's murderers, a wretched remnant of his property he has been robbed of! —Why, wench, if I must beg, think'st thou I will sue to those who have made me a mendicant? No. I will never show my grey beard, worn in sorrow for my sovereign's death, to move the compassion of some proud sequestrator, who perhaps was one of the parricides. No. If Henry Lee must sue

for food, it shall be of some sound loyalist like himself, who having but half a loaf remaining, will not nevertheless refuse to share it with him. For his daughter, she may wander her own way, which leads her to a refuge with her wealthy roundhead kinsfolks; but let her no more call him father, whose honest indigence she has refused to share!"

"You do me injustice, sir," answered the young lady, with a voice animated yet faltering, "cruel injustice. God knows, your way is my way, though it lead to ruin and beggary; and while you tread it, my arm shall support you while you will accept an aid so feeble."

"Thou word'st me, girl," answered the old cavalier, "thou word'st me, as Will Shakspeare says—thou speakest of lending me thy arm; but thy secret thought is thyself to hang upon Markham Everard's."

"My father, my father," answered Alice, in a tone of deep grief, "what can thus have altered your clear judgment and kindly heart?—Accursed be these civil commotions! not only do they destroy men's bodies, but they pervert their souls,

and the brave, the noble, the generous, become suspicious, harsh, and mean! Why upbraid me with Markham Everard? Have I seen or spoke with him since you discharged him my company, with terms less kind—I will speak it truly—than was due even to the relationship betwixt you? Why think I would sacrifice to that young man my duty to you? Know, that were I capable of such criminal weakness, Markham Everard were the first to despise me for it."

She put her handkerchief to her eyes, but she could not hide her sobs, nor conceal the distress they intimated. The old man was moved.

"I cannot tell," he said, "what to think of it. Thou seem'st sincere, and wert ever a good and kindly daughter—how thou hast let that rebel youth creep into thy heart I wot not; perhaps it is a punishment on me, who thought the loyalty of my house was like undefiled ermine. Yet here is a damned spot, and on the fairest gem of all—my own dear Alice. But do not weep—we have enough to vex us. Where is it that Shakspeare hath it:—

—————'Gentle daughter,
Give even way unto my rough affairs;
Put you not on the temper of the times,
Nor be, like them, to Percy troublesome.'"

"I am glad to hear you quote your favourite again, sir. Our little jars are ever well nigh ended when Shakspeare comes in play."

"His book was the closet-companion of my blessed master," said Sir Henry Lee; "after the Bible, (with reverence for naming them together,) he felt more comfort in it than any other; and as I have shared his disease, why it is natural I should take his medicine. Albeit, I pretend not to my master's art in explaining the dark passages; for I am but a rude man, and rustically brought up to arms and hunting."

"You have seen Shakspeare, sir?" said the young lady.

"Silly wench," replied the knight, "he died when I was a mere child—thou hast heard me say so twenty times; but thou would'st lead the old man away from the tender subject. Well, though I am not blind, I can shut my eyes and follow. Ben Jonson I knew, and could tell thee many a tale of our meetings at the Mermaid,

where, if there was much wine, there was much wit also. We did not sit blowing tobacco in each other's faces, and turning up the whites of our eyes as we turned up the bottom of the wine-pot. Old Ben adopted me as one of his sons in the muses. I have shown you, have I not, the verses, 'To my much beloved son, the worshipful Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley, Knight and Baronet ?'"

"I do not remember them at present, sir," replied Alice.

"I fear ye lie, wench," said her father; "but no matter—thou can'st not get any more fooling out of me just now. The Evil Spirit hath left Saul for the present. We are now to think what is to be done about leaving Woodstock—or defending it."

"My dearest father," said Alice, "can you still nourish a moment's hope of making good the place ?"

"I know not, wench," replied Sir Henry; "I would fain have a parting blow at them, 'tis certain—and who knows where a blessing may alight? But then, my poor knaves that must take part

with me in so hopeless a quarrel—that thought hampers me, I confess."

"Oh, let it do so, sir," replied Alice; "there are soldiers in the town, and there are three regiments at Oxford."

"Ah, poor Oxford!" exclaimed Sir Henry, whose vacillating state of mind was turned by a word to any new subject that suggested itself,—"Seat of learning and loyalty! these rude soldiers are unfit inmates for thy learned halls and poetical bowers; but thy pure and brilliant lamp shall defy the foul breath of a thousand churls, were they to blow at it like Boreas. The burning bush shall not be consumed, even by the heat of this persecution."

"True, sir," said Alice, "and it may not be useless to recollect, that any stirring of the royalists at this unpropitious moment will make them deal yet more harshly with the University, which they consider as being at the bottom of everything which moves for the King in these parts."

"It is true, wench," replied the knight; "and small cause would make the villains sequestrate the poor remains which the civil wars have left to

the colleges. That and the risk of my poor fellows—Well! thou hast disarmed me, girl. I will be as patient and calm as a martyr."

"Pray God, you keep your word, sir," replied his daughter; "but you are ever so much moved at the sight of any of these men, that——"

"Would you make a child of me, Alice?" said Sir Henry. "Why, know you not that I can look upon a viper, or a toad, or a bunch of engendering adders, without any worse feeling than a little disgust? and though a roundhead, and especially a red-coat, are in my opinion more poisonous than vipers, more loathsome than toads, more hateful than knotted adders, yet can I overcome my nature so far, that should one of them appear at this moment, thyself should see how civilly I would entreat him."

As he spoke, the military preacher abandoned his leafy screen, and stalking forward, stood unexpectedly before the old cavalier, who stared at him as if he had thought that his expressions had actually raised a devil.

"Who art thou?" at length said Sir Henry, in a raised and angry voice, while his daughter

clung to his arm in terror, little confident that her father's pacific resolutions would abide the shock of this unwelcome apparition.

"I am one," replied the soldier, "who neither fear nor shame to call myself a poor day-labourer in the great work of England—umph!—Ay, a simple and sincere upholder of the good old cause."

"And what the devil do you seek here?" said the old knight, fiercely.

"The welcome due to the steward of the Lords Commissioners," answered the soldier.

"Welcome art thou as salt would be to sore eyes," said the cavalier; "but who be your Commissioners, man?"

The soldier with little courtesy held out a scroll, which Sir Henry took from him betwixt his finger and thumb, as if it were a letter from a pest-house; and held it at as much distance from his eyes, as his purpose of reading it would permit. He then read aloud, and as he named the parties one by one, he added a short commentary on each name, addressed, indeed, to Alice, but in

such a tone that showed he cared not for its being heard by the soldier.

"*Desborough*—the ploughman Desborough—as grovelling a clown as is in England—a fellow that would be best at home, like an ancient Scythian, under the tilt of a waggon—d—n him. *Harrison*—a bloody-minded, ranting enthusiast, who read the Bible to such purpose, that he never lacked a text to justify a murder—d—n him too. *Bletson*—a true-blue commonwealth's man, one of Harrison's Rota Club, with his noddle full of new-fangled notions about government, the clearest object of which is to establish the tail upon the head; a fellow who leaves you the statutes and laws of old England, to prate of Rome and Greece—sees the Areopagus in Westminster-Hall, and takes old Noll for a Roman Consul—Adad, he is like to prove a dictator amongst them instead. Never mind; d—n Bletson too."

"Friend," said the soldier, "I would willingly be civil, but it consists not with my duty to hear these godly men, in whose service I am, spoken of after this irreverent and unbecoming fashion. And albeit I know that you malignants

think you have a right to make free with that damnation, which you seem to use as your own portion, yet it is superfluous to invoke it against others, who have better hopes in their thoughts, and better words in their mouths."

"Thou art but a canting varlet," replied the knight; "and yet thou art right in some sense—for it is superfluous to curse men who already are damned as black as the smoke of hell itself."

"I prithee forbear," continued the soldier, "for manners' sake if not for conscience—grisly oaths suit ill with gray beards."

"Nay, that is truth, if the devil spoke it," said the knight; "and I thank Heaven I can follow good counsel, though old Nick gives it. And so, friend, touching these same Commissioners, bear them this message; that Sir Henry Lee is keeper of Woodstock Park, with right of waif and stray, vert and venison, as complete as any of them have to their estate—that is, if they possess any estate but what they have gained by plundering honest men. Nevertheless, he will give place to those who have made their might their right, and will

not expose the lives of good and true men, where the odds are so much against them. And he protests that he makes this surrender, neither as acknowledging of these so termed Commissioners, nor as for his own individual part fearing their force, but purely to avoid the loss of English blood, of which so much hath been spilt in these late times."

"It is well spoken," said the steward of the Commissioners; "and therefore, I pray you, let us walk together into the house, that thou may'st deliver up unto me the vessels, and gold and silver ornaments, belonging unto the Egyptian Pharaoh who committed them to thy keeping."

"What vessels?" exclaimed the fiery old knight; "and belonging to whom? Unbaptized dog, speak civil of the Martyr in my presence, or I will do a deed misbecoming of me on that caitiff corpse of thine."—And shaking his daughter from his right arm, the old man laid his hand on his rapier.

His antagonist, on the contrary, kept his temper completely, and waving his hand to add impression

to his speech, he said, with a calmness which aggravated Sir Henry's wrath, "Nay, good friend, I prithee be still, and brawl not—it becomes not gray hairs and feeble arms to rail and rant like drunkards. Put me not to use the carnal weapon in mine own defence, but listen to the voice of reason. See'st thou not that the Lord hath decided this great controversy in favour of us and ours, against thee and thine? Wherefore, render up thy stewardship peacefully, and deliver up to me the chattels of the *Man*, Charles Stuart."

"Patience is a good nag, but she will bolt," said the knight, unable longer to rein in his wrath. He plucked his sheathed rapier from his side, struck the soldier a severe blow with it, and instantly drawing it, and throwing the scabbard over the trees, placed himself in a posture of defence, with his sword's point within half a yard of the steward's body. The latter stepped back with activity, threw his long cloak from his shoulders, and drawing his long tuck, stood upon his guard. The swords clashed smartly together, while Alice, in her terror, screamed wildly for assistance. But the combat was of short duration. The old ca-

valier had attacked a man as cunning of fence as he himself, or a little more so, and possessing all the strength and activity of which time had deprived Sir Henry, and the calmness which the other had lost in his passion. They had scarce exchanged three passes ere the sword of the knight flew up in the air, as if it had gone in search of the scabbard; and burning with shame and anger, Sir Henry stood disarmed, at the mercy of his antagonist. The republican showed no purpose of abusing his victory; nor did he, either during the combat, or after the victory was won, in any respect alter the sour and grave composure which reigned upon his countenance—a combat of life and death seemed to him a thing as familiar, and as little to be feared, as an ordinary bout with foils.

"Thou art delivered unto my hands," he said, "and by the law of arms I might smite thee under the fifth rib, even as Asahel was struck dead by Abner, the son of Nun, as he followed the chase on the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah, in the way of the wilderness of Gibeon; but far be it from me to spill thy remaining drops

of blood. True it is thou art the captive of my sword and of my spear; nevertheless, seeing that there may be a turning from thine evil ways, and a returning to those which are good, if the Lord enlarge thy date for repentance and amendment, wherefore should it be shortened by a poor sinful mortal, who is, speaking truly, but thy fellow-worm?"

Sir Henry Lee remained still confused, and unable to answer, when there arrived a fourth person, whom the cries of Alice had summoned to the spot. This was Joceline Joliffe, one of the under-keepers of the walk, who, seeing how matters stood, brandished his quarter-staff, a weapon from which he never parted, and having made it describe the figure of eight in a flourish through the air, would have brought it down with a vengeance upon the head of the steward, had not Sir Henry interposed.

"We must trail bats now, Joceline—our time of shouldering them is passed. It skills not striving against the hill—the devil rules the roast, and makes our slaves our tutors."

At this moment another auxiliary rushed out

of the thicket to the knight's assistance. It was the large wolf-dog, in strength a mastiff, in form and almost in fleetness a greyhound, which we have already mentioned. Bevis was the noblest of the kind which ever pulled down a stag, tawny-coloured like a lion, with a black muzzle and black feet, just edged with a line of white round the toes. He was as tractable as he was strong and bold. Just as he was about to rush upon the soldier, the words "Peace, Bevis!" from Sir Henry, converted the lion into a lamb, and, instead of pulling the soldier down, he walked round and round, and snuffed, as if using all his sagacity to discover who the stranger could be, towards whom, though of so questionable an appearance, he was enjoined forbearance. Apparently he was satisfied, for he laid aside his doubtful and threatening demonstrations, lowered his ears, smoothed down his bristles, and wagged his tail.

Sir Henry, who had great respect for the sagacity of his favourite, said in a low voice to Alice, "Bevis is of thy opinion, and counsels submission. There is the finger of Heaven in this to punish the pride, ever the fault of our house.—

Friend," he continued, addressing the soldier, "thou hast given the finishing-touch to a lesson, which ten years of constant misfortune have been unable fully to teach me. Thou hast distinctly shown me the folly of thinking that a good cause can strengthen a weak arm. God forgive me for the thought, but I could almost turn infidel, and believe that Heaven's blessing goes ever with the longest sword; but it will not be always thus. God knows his time.—Reach me my Toledo, Joceline, yonder it lies; and the scabbard, see where it hangs on the tree.—Do not pull at my cloak, Alice, and look so miserably frightened; I shall be in no hurry to betake me to bright steel again, I promise thee.—For thee, good fellow, I thank thee, and will make way for thy masters without farther dispute or ceremony. Joceline Joliffe is nearer thy degree than I am, and will make surrender to thee of the Lodge and household stuff. Withhold nothing, Joliffe—let them have all. For me, I will never cross the threshold again—but where to rest for a night? I would trouble no one in Woodstock—hum—ay—it shall be so. Alice and I, Joceline, will go down to thy hut by

Rosamond's well; we will borrow the shelter of thy roof for one night at least; thou wilt give us welcome, wilt thou not?—How now—a clouded brow?"

Joceline certainly looked embarrassed, directed first a glance to Alice, then looked to Heaven, then to earth, and last to the four quarters of the horizon, and then murmured out, "Certainly—without question—might he but run down to put the house in order."

"Order enough—order enough—for those that may soon be glad of clean straw in a barn," said the knight; "but if thou hast an ill will to harbour any obnoxious or malignant persons, as the phrase goes, never shame to speak it out, man. 'Tis true I took thee up when thou wert but a ragged Robin, made a keeper of thee, and so forth. —What of that? Sailors think no longer of the wind than when it forwards them on the voyage —thy betters turn with the tide, why should not such a poor knave as thou?"

"God pardon your honour for your harsh judgment," said Joliffe. "The hut is yours, such as it is, and should be were it a king's palace, as

I wish it were even for your honour's sake, and Mistress Alice—only I could wish your honour would condescend to let me step down before, in case any neighbour be there—or—or—just to put matters something into order for Mistress Alice and your honour—just to make things something seemly and shapely."

"Not a whit necessary," said the knight, while Alice had much trouble in concealing her agitation. "If thy matters are unseemly, they are fitter for a defeated knight—if they are unshapely, why, the liker to the rest of a world, which is all unshaped. Go thou with that man.—What is thy name, friend?"

"Joseph Tomkins is my name in the flesh," said the steward. "Men call me Honest Joe, and Trusty Tomkins."

"If thou hast deserved such names, considering what trade thou hast driven, thou art a jewel indeed," said the knight; "yet if thou hast not, never blush for the matter, Joseph, for if thou art not in truth honest, thou hast all the better chance to keep the fame of it—the title and the

thing itself have long walked separate ways. Farewell to thee,—and farewell to fair Woodstock !"

So saying, the old knight turned round, and pulling his daughter's arm through his own, they walked onward into the forest, in the same posture in which they were introduced to the reader.

CHAPTER III.

Now, ye wild blades, that make loose inns your stage,
To vapour forth the acts of this sad age,
Stout Edgehill fight, the Newberries and the West,
And northern clashes, where you still fought best;
Your strange escapes, your dangers void of fear,
When bullets flew between the head and ear,
Whether you fought by Damme or the Spirit,
Of you I speak.

Legend of Captain Jones.

Joseph Tomkins and Joliffe the keeper remained for some time in silence, as they stood together looking along the path in which the figures of the Knight of Ditchley and pretty Mistress Alice had disappeared behind the trees. They then gazed on each other in doubt, as men who scarce knew whether they stood on hostile or on friendly terms together, and were at a loss how to open a conversation. They heard the knight's whistle summon Bevis; but though the good hound turned his head and pricked his ears at the sound, yet he did not obey the call,

but continued to snuff around Joseph Tomkins's cloak.

"Thou art a rare one, I fear me—" said the keeper, looking to his new acquaintance. "I have heard of men who have charms to steal both dogs and deer."

"Trouble thyself not about my qualities, friend," said Joseph Tomkins, "but bethink thee of doing thy master's bidding."

Joceline did not immediately answer, but at length, as if in sign of truce, stuck the end of his quarter-staff upright in the ground, and leant upon it as he said gruffly,—"So, my tough old knight and you were at drawn bilbo, by way of afternoon service, sir preacher—Well for you I came not up till the blades were done jingling, or I had rung even-song upon your pate."

The Independent smiled grimly as he replied, "Nay, friend, it is well for thyself, for never should sexton have been better paid for the knell he tolled. Nevertheless, why should there be war betwixt us, or my hand be against thine? Thou art but a poor knave, doing thy master's order, nor have I any desire that my own blood or thine should be shed touching this matter.—

Thou art, I understand, to give me peaceful possession of the Palace of Woodstock, so called—though there is now no palace in England, no, nor shall be in the days that come after, until we shall enter the palace of the New Jerusalem, and the reign of the Saints shall commence on earth."

"Pretty well begun already, friend Tomkins," said the keeper; "you are little short of being kings already upon the matter as it now stands; and for your Jerusalem I wot not, but Woodstock is a pretty nest-egg to begin with.—Well, will you shog—will you on—will you take sasine and livery?—You heard my orders."

"Umph—I know not," said Tomkins. "I must beware of ambuscades, and I am alone here. Moreover, it is the High Thanksgiving appointed by Parliament, and owned to by the army—also the old man and the young woman may want to recover some of their clothes and personal property, and I would not that they were baulked on my account. Wherefore, if thou wilt deliver me possession to-morrow morning, it shall be done in personal presence of my own followers, and of the Presbyterian man the Mayor, so that the transfer may be made before

witnesses; whereas, were there none with us but thou to deliver, and I to take possession, the men of Belial might say, Go to, Trusty Tomkins hath been an Edomite—Honest Joe hath been as an Ishmaelite, rising up early and dividing the spoil with them that served the *Man*—yea, they that wore beards and green jerkins, as in remembrance of the *Man* and of his government."

Joceline fixed his keen dark eyes upon the soldier as he spoke, as if in design to discover whether there was fair play in his mind or not. He then applied his five fingers to scratch a large shock head of hair, as if that operation was necessary to enable him to come to a conclusion. "This is all fair sounding, brother," said he; "but I tell you plainly, there are some silver mugs, and platters, and flagons, and so forth, in yonder house, which have survived the general sweep that sent all our plate to the smelting-pot, to put our knight's troop on horseback. Now, if thou takest not these off my hand, I may come to trouble, since it may be thought I have minished their numbers;—Whereas, I being as honest a fellow——"

"As ever stole venison," said Tomkins—"nay, I do owe thee an interruption."

"Go to, then," replied the keeper; "if a stag may have come to mischance in my walk, it was no way in the course of dishonesty, but merely to keep my old dame's pan from rusting; but for silver porringers, tankards, and such like, I would as soon have drunk the melted silver as stolen the vessel made out of it. So that I would not wish blame or suspicion fell on me in this matter. And therefore, if you will have the things rendered even now, why so—and if not, hold me blameless."

"Ay, truly?" said Tomkins; "and who is to hold me blameless if they should see cause to think anything minished? Not the right worshipful Commissioners, to whom the property of the estate is as their own; therefore, as thou say'st, we must walk warily in the matter. To lock up the house and leave it, were but the work of simple ones. What say'st thou to spend the night there, and then nothing can be touched without the knowledge of us both?"

"Why, concerning that," answered the keeper, "I should be at my hut to make matters

somewhat conformable for him and Mistress Alice, for my old dame Joan is something dunny, and will scarce know how to manage—and yet, to speak truth, by the mass I would rather not see Sir Henry to-night, since what has happed to-day hath roused his spleen, and it is a peradventure he may have met something at the hut which will scarce tend to cool it."

"It is a pity," said Tomkins, "that being a gentleman of such grave and goodly presence, he should be such a malignant cavalier, and that he should, like the rest of that generation of vipers, have clothed himself with curses as with a garment."

"Which is as much as to say, the tough old knight hath a habit of swearing," said the keeper, grinning at a pun, which has been repeated since his time; "but who can help it? it comes of use and wont. Were you now, in your bodily self, to light suddenly on a Maypole, with all the blithe morris-dancers prancing around it to the merry pipe and tabor, with bells jingling, ribbons fluttering, lads frisking, and laughing

lasses leaping till you might see where the scarlet garter fastened the light-blue hose, I think some feeling, resembling either natural sociality, or old use and wont, would get the better, friend, even of thy gravity, and thou would'st fling thy cuckoldy steeple-hat one way, and that blood-thirsty long-sword another, and trip like the noodles of Hogs-Norton, when the pigs play on the organ."

The Independent turned fiercely round on the keeper, and replied, "How now, Mr Green Jerkin? what language is this to one whose hand is at the plough? I advise thee to put curb on thy tongue, lest thy ribs pay the forfeit."

"Nay, do not take the high tone with me, brother," answered Joceline; "remember thou hast not the old knight of sixty-five to deal with, but a fellow as bitter and prompt as thyself—it may be a little more so—younger, at all events—and prithee, why should'st thou take such umbrage at a Maypole? I would thou hadst known one Phil Hazeldine of these parts—He was the best morris-dancer betwixt Oxford and Burford."

"The more shame to him," answered the Independent; "and I trust he has seen the error of his ways, and made himself (as, if a man of action, he easily might) fit for better company than wood-hunters, deer-stealers, Maid Marions, swash-bucklers, deboshed revellers, bloody brawlers, maskers and mummers, lewd men and light women, fools and fiddlers, and carnal self-pleasers of every description."

"Well," replied the keeper, "you are out of breath in time; for here we stand before the famous Maypole of Woodstock."

They paused in an open space of meadow-land, beautifully skirted by large oaks and sycamores, one of which, as king of the forest, stood a little detached from the rest, as if scorning the vicinity of any rival. It was seathed and gnarled in the branches, but the immense trunk still showed to what gigantic size the monarch of the forest can attain in the groves of merry England.

"That is called the King's Oak," said Joceline; "the oldest men of Woodstock know not how old it is; they say Henry used to sit under

it with fair Rosamond, and see the lasses dance, and the lads of the village run races, and wrestle for belts or bonnets."

"I nothing doubt it, friend," said Tomkins; "a tyrant and a harlot were fitting patron and patroness for such vanities."

"Thou may'st say thy say, friend," replied the keeper, "so thou lettest me say mine. There stands the Maypole, as thou seest, half a flight-shot from the King's Oak, in the midst of the meadow. The King gave ten shillings from the customs of Woodstock to make a new one yearly, besides a tree fitted for the purpose out of the forest. Now it is warped and withered, and twisted like a wasted briar-rod. The green, too, used to be close-shaved, and rolled till it was smooth as a velvet mantle—now it is rough and overgrown."

"Well, well, friend Joceline," said the Independent, "but where was the edification of all this?—what use of doctrine could be derived from a pipe and tabor? or was there ever aught like wisdom in a bagpipe?"

"You may ask better scholars that," said Joceline; "but methinks men cannot be always grave, and with the hat over their brow. A young maiden will laugh as a tender flower will blow—ay, and a lad will like her the better for it; just as the same blithe spring that makes the young birds whistle, bids the blithe fawns skip. There have come worse days since the jolly old times have gone by:—I tell thee, that in the holidays which you, Mr Longsword, have put down, I have seen this greensward alive with merry maidens and manly fellows. The good old rector himself thought it was no sin to come for a while and look on, and his goodly cassock and scarf kept us all in good order, and taught us to limit our mirth within the bounds of discretion. We might, it may be, crack a broad jest, or pledge a friendly cup a turn too often, but it was in mirth and good neighbourhood—Ay, and if there was a bout at single-stick, or a bellyful of boxing, it was all for love and kindness; and better a few dry blows in drink, than the bloody doings we have had in sober earnest, since the presby-

ter's cap got above the bishop's mitre, and we exchanged our goodly rectors and learned doctors, whose sermons were all bolstered up with as much Greek and Latin as might have confounded the devil himself, for weavers and cobblers, and such other pulpit volunteers, as—as we heard this morning—It will out."

"Well, friend," said the Independent, with patience scarce to have been expected, "I quarrel not with thee for nauseating my doctrine. If thine ear is so much tickled with tabor tunes and morris tripping, truly it is not likely thou should'st find pleasant savour in more wholesome and sober food.—But let us to the Lodge, that we may go about our business there before the sun sets."

"Troth, and that may be advisable for more reasons than one," said the keeper, "for there have been tales about the Lodge which have made men afeard to harbour there after nightfall."

"Were not yon old knight, and yonder damsel his daughter, wont to dwell there?" said the Independent. "My information said so."

"Ay, truly did they," said Joceline; "and

when they kept a jolly household, all went well enough; for nothing banishes fear like good ale. But after the best of our men went to the wars, and were slain at Naseby flight, they who were left found the Lodge more lonesome, and the old knight has been much deserted of his servants:—marry, it might be, that he has lacked silver of late to pay groom and lackey."

"A potential reason for the diminution of a household," said the soldier.

"Right, sir, even so," replied the keeper. "They spoke of steps in the great gallery, heard by dead of the night, and voices that whispered at noon in the matted chambers; and the servants pretended that these things scared them away; but in my poor judgment, when Martinmas and Whitsuntide came round without a penny-fee, the old blue-bottles of serving-men began to think of creeping elsewhere before the frost chilled them—No devil so frightful as that which dances in the pocket where there is no cross to keep him out."

"You were reduced, then, to a petty household?" said the Independent.

"Ay, marry, were we," said Joceline; "but we kept some half-score together, what with blue-bottles in the Lodge, what with green caterpillars of the chase, like him who is yours to command; we stuck together till we found a call to take a morning's ride somewhere or other."

"To the town of Worcester," said the soldier, "where you were crushed like vermin and palmer worms, as you are."

"You may say your pleasure," replied the keeper; "I'll never contradict a man who has got my head under his belt. Our backs are at the wall, or you would not be here."

"Nay, friend," said the Independent, "thou riskest nothing by thy freedom and trust in me. I can be *bon camarado* to a good soldier, although I have striven with him even to the going down of the sun.—But here we are in front of the Lodge."

They stood accordingly in front of the old Gothic building, irregularly constructed, and at different times, as the humour of the English monarchs led them to taste the pleasures of Woodstock Chase, and to make such improvements for

their own accommodation as the increasing luxury of each age required. The oldest part of the structure had been named by tradition Fair Rosamond's Tower; it was a small turret of great height, with narrow windows, and walls of massive thickness. The tower had no opening to the ground, or means of descending, a great part of the lower portion being solid mason-work. It was traditionally said to have been accessible only by a sort of small drawbridge, which might be dropped at pleasure from a little portal near the summit of the turret, to the battlements of another tower of the same construction, but twenty feet lower, and containing only a winding stair-case, called in Woodstock Love's Ladder; because it is said, that by ascending this stair-case to the top of the tower, and then making use of the draw-bridge, Henry obtained access to the chamber of his paramour.

This tradition had been keenly impugned by Dr Rochecliffe, the former rector of Woodstock, who insisted, that what was called Rosamond's Tower, was merely an interior keep, or citadel, to

which the lord or warden of the castle might retreat, when other points of safety failed him; and either protract his defence, or, at the worst, stipulate for reasonable terms of surrender. The people of Woodstock, jealous of their ancient traditions, did not relish this new mode of explaining them away; and it is even said, that the Mayor, whom we have already introduced, became Presbyterian, in revenge of the doubts cast by the rector upon this important subject, rather choosing to give up the Liturgy than his fixed belief in Rosamond's Tower, and Love's Ladder.

The rest of the Lodge was of considerable extent, and of different ages; comprehending a nest of little courts, surrounded by buildings which corresponded with each other, sometimes within-doors, sometimes by crossing the courts, and frequently in both ways. The different heights of the building announced that they could only be connected by the usual variety of stair-cases, which exercised the limbs of our ancestors in the sixteenth and earlier centuries, and seem sometimes to have been contrived for no other purpose.

The varied and multiplied fronts of this irregular building were, as Dr Rochecliffe was wont to say, an absolute banquet to the architectural antiquary, as they certainly contained specimens of every style which existed from the pure Norman of Henry of Anjou, down to the composite, half Gothic, half classical architecture, of Elizabeth and her successor. Accordingly, the rector was himself as much enamoured of Woodstock as ever was Henry of Fair Rosamond; and as his intimacy with Sir Henry Lee permitted him entrance at all times to the Royal Lodge, he used to spend whole days in wandering about the antique apartments, examining, measuring, studying, and finding out excellent reasons for architectural peculiarities, which probably only owed their existence to the freakish fancy of a Gothic artist. But the old antiquarian had been expelled from his living by the intolerance and troubles of the times, and his successor, Nehemiah Holdenough, would have considered an elaborate investigation of the profane sculpture and architecture of blinded and blood-thirsty Papists, toge-

ther with the history of the dissolute amours of old Norman monarchs, as little better than a bowing down before the calves of Bethel, and a drinking of the cup of abominations.—We return to the course of our story.

"There is," said the Independent Tomkins, after he had carefully perused the front of the building, "many a rare monument of olden wickedness about this miscalled Royal Lodge; verily, I shall rejoice much to see the same destroyed, yea, burned to ashes, and the ashes thrown into the brook Kedron, or any other brook, that the land may be cleansed from the memory thereof, neither remember the iniquity with which their fathers have sinned."

The keeper heard him with secret indignation, and began to consider with himself, whether, as they stood but one to one, and without chance of speedy interference, he was not called upon, by his official duty, to castigate the rebel who used language so defamatory. But he fortunately recollected, that the strife must be a doubtful one —that the advantage of arms was against him—

and that, in especial, even if he should succeed in the combat, it would be at the risk of severe retaliation. It must be owned, too, that there was something about the Independent so dark and mysterious, so grim and grave, that the more open spirit of the keeper felt oppressed, and, if not overawed, at least kept in doubt concerning him; and he thought it wisest, as well as safest, for his master and himself, to avoid all subjects of dispute, and know better with whom he was dealing, before he made either friend or enemy of him.

The great gate of the Lodge was strongly bolted, but the wicket opened on Joceline's raising the latch. There was a short passage of ten feet, which had been formerly closed by a portcullis at the inner end, while three loop-holes opened on either side, through which any daring intruder might be annoyed, who, having surprised the first gate, must be thus exposed to a severe fire before he could force the second. But the machinery of the portcullis was damaged, and it now remained a fixture, brandishing its jaw, well

furnished with iron fangs, but incapable of dropping it across the path of invasion.

The way, therefore, lay open to the great hall, or outer vestibule of the Lodge. One end of this long and dusky apartment was entirely occupied by a gallery, which had in ancient times served to accommodate the musicians and minstrels. There was a clumsy stair-case at either side of it, composed of entire logs of a foot square; and in each angle of the ascent was placed, by way of sentinel, the figure of a Norman foot-soldier, having an open casque on his head, which displayed features as stern as the painter's genius could devise. Their arms were buff-jackets, or shirts of mail, round bucklers, with spikes in the centre, and buskins, which adorned and defended the feet and ancles, but left the knees bare. These wooden warders held great swords, or maces, in their hands, like military guards on duty. Many an empty hook and brace, along the walls of the gloomy apartment, marked the spots from which arms, long preserved as trophies, had been, in the pressure of the war, once more taken down to do

service in the field, like veterans whom extremity of danger recalls to battle. On other rusty fastenings were still displayed the hunting trophies of the monarchs to whom the Lodge belonged, and of the sylvan knights to whose care it had been from time to time confided.

At the nether end of the hall, a huge, heavy, stone-wrought chimney-piece, projected itself ten feet from the wall, adorned with many a cypher, and many a scutcheon of the Royal House of England. In its present state, it yawned like the arched mouth of a funeral vault, or perhaps might be compared to the crater of an extinguished volcano. But the sable complexion of the massive stone-work, and all around it, showed that the time had been when it sent its huge fires blazing up the huge chimney, besides puffing many a volume of smoke over the heads of the jovial guests, whose royalty or nobility did not render them sensitive enough to quarrel with such slight inconvenience. On these occasions, it was the tradition of the house, that two cart-loads of wood was the regular allowance for the fire

between noon and curfew, and the andirons, or dogs, as they were termed, constructed for retaining the blazing fire-wood on the hearth, were wrought in the shape of lions of such gigantic size, as might well warrant the legend. There were long seats of stone within the chimney, where, in despite of the tremendous heat, monarchs were sometimes said to have taken their station, and amused themselves with broiling the *umbles*, or *dowsets*, of the deer, upon the glowing embers, with their own royal hands. Tradition was here also ready with her record, to show what merry gibes, such as might be exchanged between prince and peer, had flown about at the merry banquet which followed the Michaelmas hunt. She could tell, too, exactly, where King Stephen sat when he darned his own princely hose, and of the odd tricks he had put upon little Winkin, the tailor of Woodstock.

Most of this rude revelry belonged to the Plantagenet times. When the house of Tudor acceded to the throne, they were more chary of their royal presence, and feasted in halls and chambers far

within, abandoning the outmost hall to the yeomen of the guard, who mounted their watch there, and passed away the night with wassail and mirth, exchanged sometimes for frightful tales of apparitions and sorceries, which made some of those grow pale, in whose ears the trumpet of a French foeman would have sounded as jollily as a summons to the woodland chase.

Joceline pointed out the peculiarities of the place to his gloomy companion more briefly than we have detailed them to the reader. The Independent seemed to listen with some interest at first, but, flinging it suddenly aside, he said, in a solemn tone, "Perish Babylon, as thy master Nebuchadnezzar hath perished! He is a wanderer, and thou shalt be a waste place—yea, and a wilderness—yea, a desert of salt, in which there shall be thirst and famine."

"There is like to be enough of both to-night," said Joceline, "unless the good knight's larder be somewhat fuller than it is wont."

"We must care for the creature-comforts," said the Independent, "but in due season, when

our duties are done.—Whither lead these entrances?"

"That to the right," replied the keeper, "leads to what are called the state-apartments, not used since the year sixteen hundred and thirty-nine, when his blessed Majesty——"

"How, sir!" interrupted the Independent, in a voice of thunder, "doest thou speak of Charles Stuart as blessing, or blessed?—beware the proclamation to that effect."

"I meant no harm," answered the keeper, suppressing his disposition to make a harsher reply. "My business is with bolts and bucks, not with titles and state affairs. But yet, whatever may have happed since, that poor King was followed with blessings enough from Woodstock, for he left a glove full of broad pieces for the poor of the place——"

"Peace, friend," said the Independent; "I will think thee else one of those besotted and blinded Papists, who hold, that bestowing of alms is an atonement and washing away of the wrongs and oppressions which have been wrought by

the alms-giver. Thou sayest, then, these were the apartments of Charles Stuart?"

"And of his father, James, before him, and Elizabeth, before *him*, and bluff King Henry, who builded that wing, before them all."

"And there, I suppose, the knight and his daughter dwelt?"

"No," replied Joceline; "Sir Henry Lee had too much reverence for—for things which are now thought worth no reverence at all—Besides, the state-rooms are unaired, and in indifferent order, since of late years. The Knight Ranger's apartment lies by that passage to the left."

"And whither goes yonder stair which seems both to lead upwards and downwards?"

"Upwards," replied the keeper, "it leads to many apartments, used for various purposes, of sleeping, and other accommodation. Downwards, to the kitchen, offices and vaults of the castle, which, at this time of the evening, you cannot see without lights."

"We will to the apartments of your knight, then," said the Independent. "Is there fitting accommodation there?"

"Such as has served a person of condition, whose lodging is now worse appointed," answered the honest keeper, his bile rising so fast that he added, in a muttering and inaudible tone, "so it may well serve a crop-eared knave like thee."

He acted as the usher, however, and led on towards the ranger's apartments.

This suite opened by a short passage from the hall, secured at time of need by two oaken doors, which could be fastened by large bars of the same, that were drawn out of the wall, and entered into square holes contrived for their reception on the other side of the portal. At the end of this passage, a small anteroom received them, into which opened the sitting-apartment of the good knight—which, in the style of the times, might have been termed a fair summer parlour—lighted by two oriel windows, so placed as to command each of them a separate avenue, leading distant and deep down into the forest. The principal ornament of the apartment, besides two or three family portraits of less interest, was a tall full-length picture, which hung above the chimney-piece, which, like that in the hall, was of

heavy stone-work, ornamented with carved scutcheons, emblazoned with various devices. The portrait was that of a man about fifty years of age, in complete plate armour, and painted in the harsh and dry manner of Holbein—probably, indeed, the work of that artist, as the dates corresponded. The formal and marked angles, points, and projections of the armour, were a good subject for the harsh pencil of that early school. The face of the knight was, from the fading of the colours, pale and dim, like that of some being from the other world, yet the lines expressed forcibly pride and exultation. He pointed with his leading-staff or truncheon to the back-ground, where, in such perspective as the artist possessed, were depicted the remains of a burning church, or monastery, and four or five soldiers, in red cassocks, bearing away in triumph what seemed a brazen font or laver. Above their heads might be traced in scroll, "*Lee Victor sic voluit.*" Right opposite to the picture hung, in a niche in the wall, a complete set of tilting armour, the black and gold colours, and ornaments

of which, exactly corresponded with those exhibited in the portrait.

The picture was one of those which, from something marked in the features and expression, attract the observation even of those who are ignorant of art. The Independent looked at it until a smile passed transiently over his clouded brow. Whether he smiled to see the grim old cavalier employed in desecrating a religious house—(an occupation much conforming to the practice of his own sect)—whether he smiled in contempt of the old painter's harsh and dry mode of working—or whether the sight of this remarkable portrait revived some other ideas, the under-keeper could not decide.

The smile passed away in an instant, as the soldier looked to the oriel windows. The recesses within them were raised a step or two from the wall. In one was placed a walnut-tree reading-desk, and a huge stuffed arm-chair, covered with Spanish leather. A little cabinet stood beside, with some of its shuttles and drawers open, displaying hawks-bells, dog-whistles, instruments for trimming a falcon's feathers, bridle-bits of various

constructions, and other trifles connected with sylvan sport.

The other little recess was differently furnished. There lay some articles of needle-work on a small table, besides a lute, with a book having some airs pricked down in it, and a frame for working embroidery. Some tapestry was displayed around the recess, with more attention to ornament than was visible in the rest of the apartment; the arrangement of a few bow-pots, with such flowers as the fading season afforded, showed also the superintendence of female taste.

Tomkins cast an eye of careless regard upon these subjects of female occupation, then stepped into the farther window, and began to turn the leaves of a folio, which lay open on the reading-desk, apparently with some interest. Joceline, who had determined to watch his motions without interfering with them, was standing at some distance in dejected silence, when a door behind the tapestry suddenly opened, and a pretty village maid tripped out with a napkin in her hand, as if she had been about some household duty.

"How now, Sir Impudence?" she said to

Joceline, in a smart tone; "what do you here prowling about the apartments when the master is not at home?"

But instead of the answer which perhaps she expected, Joceline Joliffe cast a mournful glance towards the soldier in the oriel window, as if to make what he said fully intelligible, and replied with a dejected appearance and voice, "Alack, my pretty Phœbe, there come those here that have more right or might than any of us, and will use little ceremony in coming when they will, and staying while they please."

He darted another glance at Tomkins, who still seemed busy with the book before him, then sidled close to the astonished girl, who had continued looking alternately at the keeper and at the stranger, as if she had been unable to understand the words of the first, or to comprehend the meaning of the second being present.

"Go," whispered Joliffe, approaching his mouth so near her cheek, that his breath waved the curls of her hair; "go, my dearest Phœbe, trip it as fast as a fawn down to my lodge—I will soon be there, and——"

"Your lodge, indeed!" said Phœbe; "you are very bold, for a poor killbuck that never frightened anything before save a dun deer—*Your* lodge, indeed!—I am like to go there, I think."

"Hush, hush! Phœbe—here is no time for jesting. Down to my hut, I say, like a deer, for the knight and Mrs Alice are both there, and I fear will not return hither again.—All's naught, girl—and our evil days are come at last with a vengeance—we are fairly at bay and fairly hunted down."

"Can this be, Joceline?" said the poor girl, turning to the keeper with an expression of fright in her countenance, which she had hitherto averted in rural coquetry.

"As sure, my dearest Phœbe, as——"

The rest of the asseveration was lost in Phœbe's ear, so closely did the keeper's lips approach it; and if they approached so very near as to touch her cheek, grief, like impatience, hath its privileges, and poor Phœbe had enough of serious alarm to prevent her from demurring upon such a trifle.

But no trifle was the approach of Joceline's

lips to Phœbe's pretty though sun-burnt cheek, in the estimation of the Independent, who, a little before the object of Joceline's vigilance, had been in his turn the observer of the keeper's demeanour, so soon as the interview betwixt Phœbe and him had become so interesting. And when he remarked the closeness of Joceline's argument, he raised his voice to a pitch of harshness that would have rivalled that of a saw, and which at once made Joceline and Phœbe spring six feet apart, each in contrary directions, and if Cupid was of the party, must have sent him out at the window like a wild-duck flying from a culverin. Instantly throwing himself into the attitude of a preacher and a reprover of vice, "How now!" he exclaimed, "shameless and impudent as you are!—What—chambering and wantoning in our very presence!—How—would you play your pranks before the steward of the Commissioners of the High Court of Parliament, as ye would in a booth at the fulsome fair, or amidst the trappings and tracings of a profane dancing-school, where the scoundrel minstrels make their ungodly weapons to squeak, 'Kiss

and be kind, the fiddler's blind?'—But here," he said, dealing a perilous thump upon the volume—" Here is the King and high priest of those vices and follies!—Here is he, whom men of folly profanely call nature's miracle!—Here is he, whom princes chose for their cabinet-keeper, and whom maids of honour take for their bed-fellow!—Here is the prime teacher of fine words, foppery and folly—Here!"—(dealing another thump upon the volume—and oh! revered of the Roxburghe, it was the first folio—beloved of the Bannatyne, it was Hemmings and Condel—it was the *editio princeps*)—" On thee," he continued—" on thee, William Shakspeare, I charge whate'er of such lawless idleness and immodest folly hath defiled the land since thy day!"

" By the mass, a heavy accusation," said Joceline, the bold recklessness of whose temper could not be long overawed; " Odds pitlikins, is our master's old favourite, Will of Stratford, to answer for every buss that has been snatched since James's time?—a perilous reckoning truly—but I wonder who is sponsible for what lads and lasses did before his day?"

"Scoff not," said the soldier, "lest I, being called thereto by the voice within me, do deal with thee as a scorner. Verily I say, that since the devil fell from Heaven, he never wanted agents on earth; yet nowhere hath he met with a wizard having such infinite power over men's souls as this pestilent fellow Shakspeare. Seeks a wife a foul example for adultery, here she shall find it—Would a man know how to train his fellow to be a murderer, here shall he find tutoring—Would a lady marry a heathen negro, she shall have chronicled example for it—Would any one scorn at his Maker, he shall be furnished with a jest in this book—Would he defy his brother in the flesh, he shall be accommodated with a challenge—Would you be drunk, Shakspeare will cheer you with a cup—Would you plunge in sensual pleasures, he will soothe you to indulgence, as with the lascivious sounds of a lute. This, I say, this book is the well-head and source of all those evils which have overrun the land like a torrent, making men scoffers, doubters, deniers, murderers, make-bates, and lovers of the wine-pot, haunting unclean places, and sitting long at

the evening-wine. Away with him, away with him, men of England! to Tophet with his wicked book, and to the Vale of Hinnom with his accursed bones! Verily but that our march was hasty when we passed Stratford, in the year 1643, with Sir William Waller; but that our march was hasty——"

"Because Prince Rupert was after you with his cavaliers," muttered the incorrigible Joceline.

"I say," continued the zealous trooper, raising his voice and extending his arm—"but that our march was by command hasty, and that we turned not aside in our riding, closing our ranks each one upon the other as becomes men of war, I had torn on that day the bones of that preceptor of vice and debauchery from the grave, and given them to the next dunghill. I would have made his memory a scoff and a hissing!"

"That is the bitterest thing he has said yet," observed the keeper. "Poor Will would have liked the hissing worse than all the rest."

"Will the gentleman say any more?" inquired Phœbe in a whisper. "Lack-a-day, he talks

brave words, if one knew but what they meant. But it is a mercy our good knight did not see him ruffle the book at that rate—Mercy on us, there would certainly have been bloodshed.—But oh the father—see how he is twisting his face about! —Is he ill of the colic, think'st thou, Joceline? Or, may I offer him a glass of strong waters?"

"Hark thee hither, wench!" said the keeper, "he is but loading his blunderbuss for another volley; and while he turns up his eyes, and twists about his face, and clenches his fist, and shuffles and tramples with his feet in that fashion, he is bound to take no notice of anything. I would be sworn to cut his purse, if he had one, from his side, without his feeling it."

"La! Joceline," said Phœbe, "and if he abides here in this turn of times, I dare say the gentleman will be easily served."

"Care not thou about that," said Joliffe; "but tell me softly and hastily, what is in the pantry?"

"Small house-keeping enough," said Phœbe, "a cold capon and some comfits, and the great standing venison pasty, with plenty of spice—a manchet or two besides, and that is all."

"Well, it will serve for a pinch—wrap thy cloak round thy comely body—get a basket and a brace of trenchers and towels, they are heinously impoverished down yonder—carry down the capon and the manchets—the pasty must abide with this same soldier and me, and the pie-crust will serve us for bread."

"Rarely," said Phœbe; "I made the paste myself—it is as thick as the walls of Fair Rosamond's Tower."

"Which two pair of jaws would be long in gnawing through, work hard as they might," said the keeper. "But what liquor is there?"

"Only a bottle of Alicant, and one of sack, with the stone jug of strong waters," answered Phœbe.

"Put the wine-flasks into thy basket," said Joceline, "the knight must not lack his evening draught—and down with thee to the hut like a lapwing. There is enough for supper, and to-morrow is a new day.—Ha! by heaven I thought yonder man's eye watched us—No—he only rolled it round him in a brown study—Deep enough doubtless as they all are.—But d—n him, he

must be bottomless if I cannot sound him before the night's out.—Hie thee away, Phœbe."

But Phœbe was a rural coquette, and, aware that Joceline's situation gave him no advantage of avenging the challenge in a fitting way, she whispered in his ear, "Do you think our knight's friend, Shakspeare, really found out all these naughty devices the gentleman spoke of?"

Off she darted while she spoke, while Joliffe menaced future vengeance with his finger, as he muttered, "Go thy way, Phœbe Mayflower, the lightest-footed and lightest-hearted wench that ever tripped the sod in Woodstock-park!—After her, Bevis, and bring her safe to our master at the hut."

The large grey-hound arose like a human servitor who had received an order, and followed Phœbe through the hall, first licking her hand to make her sensible of his presence, and then putting himself to a slow trot, so as best to accommodate himself to the light pace of her whom he convoyed, whom Joceline had not extolled for her activity without due reason. While Phœbe

and her guardian thread the forest glades, we return to the Lodge.

The Independent now seemed to start as if from a reverie. "Is the young woman gone?" said he.

"Ay, marry is she," said the keeper; "and if your worship hath farther commands, you must rest contented with male attendance."

"Commands—umph—I think the damsel might have tarried for another exhortation," said the soldier—"truly, I profess my mind was much inclined toward her for her edification."

"Oh, sir," replied Joliffe, "she will be at church next Sunday, and if your military reverence is pleased again to hold forth amongst us, she will have use of the doctrine with the rest. But young maidens of these parts hear no private homilies.—And what is now your pleasure? Will you look at the other rooms, and at the few plate articles which have been left?"

"Umph—no," said the Independent—"it wears late, and gets dark—thou hast the means of giving us beds, friend?"

"Better you never slept in," replied the keeper.

"And wood for a fire, and a light, and some small pittance of creature-comforts for refreshment of the outward man?" continued the soldier.

"Without doubt," replied the keeper, displaying a prudent anxiety to gratify this important personage.

In a few minutes a great standing candlestick was placed on an oaken table. The mighty venison pasty, adorned with parsley, was placed on the board on a clean napkin; the stone-bottle of strong waters, with a black-jack full of ale, formed comfortable appendages; and to this meal sate down in social manner the soldier, occupying a great elbow-chair, and the keeper, at his invitation using the more lowly accommodation of a stool, at the opposite side of the table. Thus agreeably employed, our history leaves them for the present.

CHAPTER IV.

————" Yon path of greensward
Winds round by sparry grot and gay pavilion ;
There is no flint to gall thy tender foot,
There's ready shelter from each breeze, or shower.—
But Duty guides not that way—see her stand,
With wand entwined with amaranth, near yon cliffs.
Oft where she leads thy blood must mark thy footsteps,
Oft where she leads thy head must bear the storm,
And thy shrunk form endure heat, cold, and hunger ;
But she will guide thee up to noble heights,
Which he who gains seems native of the sky,
While earthly things lie stretch'd beneath his feet,
Diminish'd, shrunk, and valueless.—"

Anonymous.

The reader cannot have forgotten that after his scuffle with the commonwealth soldier, Sir Henry Lee, with his daughter Alice, had departed to take refuge in the hut of the stout keeper Joceline Joliffe. They walked slow, as before, for the old knight was at once oppressed by perceiving these last vestiges of royalty fall into the hands of republicans, and by the recollection

of his recent defeat. At times he paused, and with his arms folded on his bosom, recalled all the circumstances attending his expulsion from a house so long his home. It seemed to him that, like the champions of romance of whom he had sometimes read, he himself was retiring from the post which it was his duty to guard, defeated by a Paynim knight, for whom the adventure had been reserved by Fate. Alice had her own painful subjects of recollection, nor had the tenor of her last conversation with her father been so pleasant as to make her anxious to renew it until his temper should be more composed; for, with an excellent disposition, and much love to his daughter, age and misfortunes, which of late came thicker and thicker, had given to the good knight's passions a wayward irritability which was unknown to his better days. His daughter, and one or two attached servants, who still followed his decayed fortunes, soothed his frailty as much as possible, and pitied him even while they suffered under its effects.

It was a long time ere he spoke, and then he referred to an incident already noticed. "It

is strange," he said, "that Bevis should have followed Joceline and that fellow rather than me."

"Assure yourself, sir," replied Alice, "that his sagacity saw in this man a stranger, whom he thought himself obliged to watch circumspectly, and therefore he remained with Joceline."

"Not so, Alice," answered Sir Henry; "he leaves me because my fortunes have fled from me. There is a feeling in nature, affecting even the instinct, as it is called, of dumb animals, which teaches them to fly from misfortune. The very deer there will butt a sick or wounded buck from the herd; hurt a dog, and the whole kennel will fall on him and worry him; fishes devour their own kind when they are wounded with a spear; cut a crow's wing, or break his leg, the others will buffet it to death."

"That may be true of the more irrational kinds of animals among each other," said Alice, "for their whole life is well nigh a warfare; but the dog leaves his own race to attach himself to ours; forsakes, for his master, the company, food, and pleasure of his own kind; and surely the fidelity of such a devoted and voluntary servant

as Bevis hath been in particular, ought not to be lightly suspected."

"I am not angry at the dog, Alice; I am only sorry," replied her father. "I have read, in faithful chronicles, that when Richard II. and Henry of Bolingbroke were at Berkeley Castle, a dog of the same kind deserted the King, whom he had always attended upon, and attached himself to Henry, whom he then saw for the first time. Richard foretold, from the desertion of his favourite, his approaching deposition. The dog was afterwards kept at Woodstock, and Bevis is said to be of his breed, which was heedfully kept up. What I might foretell of mischief from his desertion, I cannot guess, but my mind assures me it bodes no good."

There was a distant rustling among the withered leaves, a bouncing or galloping sound on the path, and the favourite dog instantly joined his master.

"Come into court, old knave," said Alice, cheerfully, "and defend thy character, which is well nigh endangered by this absence." But the dog only paid her courtesy by gambolling around

them, and instantly plunged back again, as fast as he could scamper.

"How now, knave?" said the knight; "thou art too well trained, surely, to take up the chase without orders." A minute more showed them Phœbe Mayflower approaching, her light pace so little impeded by the burthen which she bore, that she joined her master and young mistress just as they arrived at the keeper's hut, which was the boundary of their journey. Bevis, who had shot a-head to pay his compliments to Sir Henry his master, had returned again to his immediate duty, the escorting Phœbe and her cargo of provisions. The whole party stood presently assembled before the door of the keeper's hut.

In better times, a substantial stone habitation, fit for the yeoman-keeper of a royal walk, had adorned this place. A fair spring gushed out near the spot, and once traversed yards and courts, attached to well-built and convenient kennels and mews. But in some of the skirmishes which were common through the whole country during the civil wars, this little sylvan dwelling had been attacked and defended, stormed and burnt. A

neighbouring squire, of the parliamentarian side of the question, took advantage of Sir Henry Lee's absence, who was in Charles's camp, and of the decay of the royal cause, and had, without scruple, carried off the hewn stones, and such building materials as the fire left unconsumed, and repaired his own manor-house with them. The yeoman-keeper, therefore, our friend Joceline, had constructed, for his own accommodation, and that of the old woman he called his dame, a wattled hut, such as his own labour, with that of a neighbour or two, had erected in the course of a few days. The walls were plastered with clay, white-washed, and covered with vines and other creeping plants; the roof was neatly thatched, and the whole, though merely a hut, had, by the neat-handed Joliffe, been so arranged as not to disgrace the condition of the dweller.

The knight advanced to the entrance; but the ingenuity of the architect, for want of better lock to the door, which itself was but of wattles curiously twisted, had contrived a mode of securing the latch on the inside with a pin, which prevented it from rising; and in this manner it

was at present fastened. Conceiving that this was some precaution of Joliffe's old housekeeper, of whose deafness they were all aware, Sir Henry raised his voice to demand admittance, but in vain. Irritated at this delay, he pressed the door at once with foot and hand, in a way which the frail barrier was unable to resist; it gave way accordingly, and the knight thus forcibly entered the kitchen, or outward apartment, of his servant. In the midst of the floor, and with a posture which indicated embarrassment, stood a youthful stranger, in a riding-suit.

"This may be my last act of authority here," said the knight, seizing the stranger by the collar, "but I am still Ranger of Woodstock for this night at least—Who, or what art thou?"

The stranger dropped the riding-mantle in which his face was muffled, and at the same time fell on one knee.

"Your poor kinsman, Markham Everard," he said, "who came hither for your sake, although he fears you will scarce make him welcome for his own."

Sir Henry started back, but recovered himself in an instant, as one who recollected that he had

a part of dignity to perform. He stood erect, therefore, and replied, with considerable assumption of stately ceremony:

"Fair kinsman, it pleases me that you are come to Woodstock upon the very first night that, for many years which have past, is likely to promise you a worthy or a welcome reception."

"Now God grant it be so, that I rightly hear and duly understand you," said the young man; while Alice, though she was silent, kept her looks fixed on her father's face, as if desirous to know whether his meaning was kind towards his nephew, which her knowledge of his character inclined her greatly to doubt.

The knight meanwhile darted a sardonic look, first on his nephew, then on his daughter, and proceeded—"I need not, I presume, inform Mr Markham Everard, that it cannot be our purpose to entertain him, or even to offer him a seat in this poor hut."

"I will attend you most willingly to the Lodge," said the young gentleman. "I had, indeed, judged you were already there for the evening, and feared to intrude upon you. But if you would permit me, my dearest uncle, to escort my kinswo-

man and you back to the Lodge, believe me, amongst all which you have so often done of good and kind, you never conferred benefit that will be so dearly prized."

"You mistake me greatly, Mr Markham Everard," replied the knight. "It is not our purpose to return to the Lodge to-night, nor, by Our Lady, to-morrow neither. I meant but to intimate to you, in all courtesy, that at Woodstock Lodge you will find those for whom you are fitting society, and who, doubtless, will afford you a willing welcome; which I, sir, in this my present retreat, do not presume to offer to a person of your consequence."

"For Heaven's sake," said the young man, turning to Alice, "tell me how I am to understand language so mysterious."

Alice, to prevent his increasing the restrained anger of her father, compelled herself to answer, though it was with difficulty, "We are expelled from the Lodge by soldiers."

"Expelled—by soldiers!" exclaimed Everard, in surprise—"there is no legal warrant for this."

"None at all," answered the knight, in the same tone of cutting irony which he had all along

used, "and yet as lawful a warrant, as for aught that has been wrought in England this twelve-month and more. You are, I think, or were, an Inns-of-Court-man—marry, sir, your enjoyment of your profession is like that lease which a prodigal wishes to have of a wealthy widow. You have already survived the law which you studied, and its expiry doubtless has not been without a legacy—some decent pickings, some merciful increases, as the phrase goes. You have deserved it two ways—you wore buff and bandalier, as well as wielded pen and ink—I have not heard if you held forth too."

"Think of me and speak of me as harshly as you will, sir," said Everard, submissively. "I have but, in this evil time, guided myself by my conscience, and my father's commands."

"O, an you talk of conscience," said the old knight, "I must have mine eye upon you, as Hamlet says. Never yet did Puritan cheat so grossly as when he was appealing to his conscience; and as for thy *father*——"

He was about to proceed in a tone of the same invective, when the young man interrupted him,

by saying, in a firm tone, "Sir Henry Lee, you have ever been thought noble—Say of me what you will, but speak not of my father what the ear of a son should not endure, and which yet his arm cannot resent. To do me such wrong is to insult an unarmed man, or to beat a captive."

Sir Henry paused, as if struck by the remark. "Thou hast spoken truth in that, Mark, wert thou the blackest Puritan whom hell ever vomited, to distract an unhappy country."

"Be that as you will to think it," replied Everard; "but let me not leave you to the shelter of this wretched hovel. The night is drawing to storm—let me but conduct you to the Lodge, and expel these intruders, who can as yet at least have no warrant for what they do. I will not linger a moment behind them, save just to deliver my father's message.—Grant me but this much, for the love you once bore me!"

"Yes, Mark," answered his uncle, firmly, but sorrowfully, "thou speakest truth—I did love thee once. The bright-haired boy whom I taught to ride, to shoot, to hunt—whose hours of happiness were spent with me wherever those of gra-

ver labours were employed—I did love that boy —ay, and I am weak enough to love even the memory of what he was.—But he is gone, Mark —he is gone; and in his room I only behold an avowed and determined rebel to his religion and to his king—a rebel more detestable on account of his success, the more infamous through the plundered wealth with which he hopes to gild his villainy.—But I am poor, thou think'st, and should hold my peace, lest men say, 'Speak, sirrah, when you should.'—Know, however, that indigent and plundered as I am, I feel myself dishonoured in holding even but this much talk with the tool of usurping rebels.—Go to the Lodge, if thou wilt—yonder lies the way—but think not that to regain my dwelling there, or all the wealth I ever possessed in my wealthiest days, I would willingly accompany thee three steps on the greensward. If I must be thy companion, it shall be only when thy red-coats have tied my hands behind me, and bound my legs beneath my horse's belly. Thou may'st be my fellow-traveller then, I grant thee, if thou wilt, but not sooner."

Alice, who suffered cruelly during this dia-

logue, and was well aware that farther argument would only kindle the knight's resentment still more highly, ventured at last, in her anxiety, to make a sign to her cousin to break off the interview, and to retire, since her father commanded his absence in a manner so peremptory. Unhappily she was observed by Sir Henry, who, concluding that what he saw was evidence of a private understanding betwixt the cousins, his wrath acquired new fuel, and it required the utmost exertion of self-command, and recollection of all that was due to his own dignity, to enable him to veil his real fury under the same ironical manner which he had adopted at the beginning of this angry interview.

"If thou art afraid," he said, "to trace our forest-glades by night, respected stranger, to whom I am perhaps bound to do honour as my successor in the charge of these walks, here seems to be a modest damsel, who will be most willing to wait on thee, and be thy bow-bearer—Only, for her mother's sake, let there pass some slight form of marriage between you—Ye need no licence or priest in these happy days, but may be buckled like beggars in a ditch, with a hedge for

a church-roof, and a tinker for a priest. I crave pardon of you for making such an officious and simple request—perhaps you are a Ranter—or one of the family of Love, or hold marriage rites as unnecessary, as Knipperdoling, or Jack of Leyden."

"For mercy's sake, forbear such dreadful jesting, my father; and do you, Markham, begone, in God's name, and leave us to our fate—Your presence makes my father rave."

"Jesting!" said Sir Henry, "I was never more serious—Raving!—I was never more composed.—I could never brook that falsehood should approach me—I would no more bear by my side a dishonoured daughter than a dishonoured sword; and this unhappy day hath shown that both can fail."

"Sir Henry," said young Everard, "load not your soul with a heavy crime, which be assured you do, in treating your daughter thus unjustly. It is long now since you denied her to me, when we were poor and you were powerful. I acquiesced in your prohibition of all suit and intercourse. God knoweth what I suffered—but I

acquiesced. Neither is it to renew my suit that I now come hither, and have, I do acknowledge, sought speech of her—not for her own sake only, but for yours also. Destruction hovers over you, ready to close her pinions to stoop, and her talons to clutch—Yes, sir, look contemptuous as you will, such is the case; and it is to protect both you and her that I am here."

"You refuse then my free gift," said Sir Henry Lee; "or perhaps you think it loaded with too hard conditions?"

"Shame, shame on you, Sir Henry!" said Everard, waxing warm in his turn; "have your political prejudices so utterly warped every feeling of a father, that you can speak with bitter mockery and scorn of what concerns your own daughter's honour?—Hold up your head, fair Alice, and tell your father he has forgotten nature in his fantastic spirit of loyalty.—Know, Sir Henry, that though I would prefer your daughter's hand to every blessing which Heaven could bestow on me, I would not accept it—my conscience would not permit me to do so—when I knew it must withdraw her from her duty to you."

"Your conscience is over scrupulous, young man;—carry it to some dissenting rabbi, and he who takes all that comes to net, will teach thee it is sinning against our mercies to refuse any good thing that is freely offered to us."

"When it is freely offered, and kindly offered —not when the offer is made in irony and insult. —Fare thee well, Alice—if aught could make me desire to profit by thy father's wild wish to cast thee from him in a moment of unworthy suspicion, it would be that while indulging in such sentiments, Sir Henry Lee is tyranically oppressing the creature, who of all others is most dependent on his kindness—who of all others will most feel his severity—and whom, of all others, he is most bound to cherish and support."

"Do not fear for me, Mr Everard," exclaimed Alice, aroused from her timidity by a dread of the consequences not unlikely to ensue, where civil war set relations, as well as fellow-citizens, in opposition to each other.—"Oh, begone, I conjure you begone! Nothing stands betwixt me and my father's kindness, but these unhappy family divisions—but your ill-timed presence here —For Heaven's sake leave us!"

"Soh, mistress!" answered the hot old cavalier; "you play lady paramount already; and who but you!—you would dictate to our train, I warrant, like Goneril and Regan. But I tell thee, no man shall leave my house—and, humble as it is, *this* is now my house—while he has aught to say to me that is to be spoken, as this young man now speaks, with a bent brow and a lofty tone.—Speak out, sir, and say your worst!"

"Fear not my temper, Mrs Alice," said Everard, with equal firmness and placidity of manner; "and you, Sir Henry, do not think that if I speak firmly, I mean therefore to speak in anger, or officiously. You have taxed me with much, and, were I guided by the wild spirit of romantic chivalry, much which, even from so near a relative, I ought not, as being by birth, and in the world's estimation, a gentleman, to pass over without reply. Is it your pleasure to give me patient hearing?"

"If you stand on your defence," answered the stout old knight, "God forbid that you should not challenge a patient hearing—ay, though your pleading were two parts disloyalty and one blas-

phemy—Only, be brief—this has already lasted but too long."

"I will, Sir Henry," replied the young man; "yet it is hard to crowd into a few sentences, the defence of a life which, though short, has been a busy one—too busy, your indignant gesture would assert. But I deny it; I have drawn my sword neither hastily, nor without due consideration, for a people whose rights have been trampled on, and whose consciences have been oppressed.—Frown not, sir—such is not your view of the contest, but such is mine. For my religious principles, at which you have scoffed, believe me, that though they depend not on set forms, they are no less sincere than your own, and thus far purer—excuse the word—that they are unmingled with the blood-thirsty dictates of a barbarous age, which you and others have called the code of chivalrous honour. Not my own natural disposition, but the better doctrine which my creed has taught, enables me to bear your harsh revilings without answering in a similar tone of wrath and reproach. You may carry insult to extremity against me at your pleasure—not on

account of our relationship alone, but because I am bound in charity to endure it. This, Sir Henry, is much from one of our house. But, with forbearance far more than this requires, I can refuse at your hands the gift, which, most of all things under Heaven, I should desire to obtain, because duty calls upon her to sustain and comfort you, and because it were sin to permit you, in your blindness, to spurn your comforter from your side.—Farewell, sir—not in anger but in pity—We may meet in a better time, when your heart and your principles shall master the unhappy prejudices by which they are now overclouded.—Farewell—farewell, Alice!"

The last words were repeated twice, and in a tone of feeling and passionate grief, which differed utterly from the steady and almost severe tone in which he had addressed Sir Henry Lee. He turned and left the hut so soon as he had uttered these last words; and, as if ashamed of the tenderness which had mingled with his accents, the young commonwealth's-man turned and walked sternly and resolvedly forth into the moonlight, which now was spreading its broad light and autumnal shadows over the woodland.

So soon as he was departed, Alice, who had been during the whole scene in the utmost terror that her father might have been hurried, by his natural heat of temper, from violence of language into violence of action, sunk down upon a settle twisted out of willow-boughs, like most of Joceline's few movables, and endeavoured to conceal the tears which accompanied the thanks she rendered in broken accents to Heaven, that, notwithstanding the near alliance and relationship of the parties, some fatal deed had not closed an interview so perilous and so angry. Phœbe Mayflower blubbered heartily for company, though she understood but little of what had passed; just, indeed, enough to enable her afterwards to report to some half-dozen particular friends, that her old master, Sir Henry, had been perilous angry, and almost fought with young Master Everard, because he had well nigh carried away her young mistress.—"And what could he have done better?" said Phœbe, "seeing the old man had nothing left either for Mrs Alice or himself; and as for Mr Mark Everard, and our young lady, oh, they had spo-

ken such loving things to each other, as are not to be found in the history of Argalus and Parthenia, who, as the story-book tells, were the truest pair of lovers in all Arcadia, and Oxfordshire to boot."

Old Goody Jellycot had popped her scarlet hood into the kitchen more than once while the scene was proceeding; but, as the worthy dame was parcel blind, and more than parcel deaf, knowledge was excluded by two principal entrances; and though she comprehended, by a sort of general instinct, that the gentlefolks were at high words, yet why they chose Joceline's hut for the scene of their dispute, was as great a mystery as the subject of the quarrel.

But what was the state of the old cavalier's mood, thus contradicted, as his most darling principles had been, by the last words of his departing nephew? The truth is, that he was less thoroughly moved than his daughter expected; and in all probability his nephew's bold defence of his religious and political opinions rather pacified than aggravated his displeasure. Although sufficiently impatient of contradiction, still evasion

and subterfuge were more alien to the blunt old Ranger's nature than manly vindication and direct opposition; and he was wont to say, that he ever loved the buck best who stood boldest at bay. He graced his nephew's departure, however, with a quotation from Shakspeare, whom, as many others do, he was wont to quote from a sort of habit and respect to him, as a favourite of his unfortunate master, without having either much real taste for his works, or great skill in applying the passages which he retained on his memory.

"Mark," he said, "mark this, Alice—the devil can quote scripture for his purpose. Why, this young fanatic cousin of thine, with no more beard than I have seen on a clown playing Maid Marion on May-day, when the village barber had shaved him in too great a hurry, shall match any bearded Presbyterian or Independent of them all, in laying down his doctrines and his uses, and bethumping us with his texts and his homilies. I would worthy and learned Doctor Rochecliffe had been here, with his battery ready-mounted from the Vulgate, and the Septuagint,

and what not—he would have battered the presbyterian spirit out of him with a wanion. However, I am glad the young man is no sneaker; for, were a man of the devil's opinion in religion, and of Old Noll's in politics, he were better open on it full cry, than deceive you by hunting counter, or running a false scent. Come—wipe thine eyes—the fray is over, and not like to be stirred again soon, I trust."

Encouraged by these words, Alice rose, and, bewildered as she was, endeavoured to superintend the arrangements for their meal and their repose in their new habitation. But her tears fell so fast, they marred her counterfeited diligence; and it was well for her that Phœbe, though too ignorant and too simple to comprehend the extent of her distress, could afford her material assistance, in lack of mere sympathy.

With great readiness and address, the damsel set about everything that was requisite for preparing the supper and the beds; now screaming into Dame Jellycot's ear, now whispering into her mistress's, and artfully managing, as if she was merely the agent, under Alice's orders. When

the cold meat was set forth, Sir Henry Lee kindly pressed his daughter to take refreshment, as if to make up, indirectly, for his previous harshness towards her; while he himself, like an experienced campaigner, showed, that neither the mortifications nor brawls of the day; nor the thoughts of what was to come to-morrow, could diminish his appetite for supper, which was his favourite meal. He ate up two-thirds of the capon, and, devoting the first bumper to the happy restoration of Charles, second of the name, he finished a quart of wine; for he belonged to a school accustomed to feed the flame of their loyalty with copious brimmers. He even sang a verse of "The King shall enjoy his own again," in which Phœbe, half sobbing, and Dame Jellycot, screaming against time and tune, were contented to lend their aid, to cover Mistress Alice's silence.

At length the jovial knight betook himself to his rest, on the keeper's straw pallet, in a recess adjoining to the kitchen, and, unaffected by his change of dwelling, slept fast and deep. Alice had less quiet rest in old Goody Jellycot's wicker

couch, in the inner apartment; while the dame and Phœbe slept on a mattress, stuffed with dry leaves, in the same chamber, soundly as those whose daily toil gains their daily bread, and whom morning calls up only to renew the toils of yesterday.

CHAPTER V.

> My tongue pads slowly under this new language,
> And starts and stumbles at these uncouth phrases.
> They may be great in worth and weight, but hang
> Upon the native glibness of my language
> Like Saul's plate-armour on the shepherd boy,
> Encumbering and not arming him.
>
> J. B.

As Markham Everard pursued his way towards the Lodge, through one of the long sweeping glades which traversed the forest, varying in breadth, till the trees were now so close that the boughs made darkness over their heads, then receding farther to let in glimpses of the moon, and anon opening yet wider into little meadows, or savannahs, on which the moon-beams lay in silvery silence; as he thus proceeded on his lonely course, the various effects produced by that delicious light on the oaks, whose dark leaves, gnarled branches, and massive trunks it gilded, more or less partially, might have drawn the attention of a poet or a painter.

But if Everard thought of anything saving the painful scene in which he had just played his part, and of which the result seemed the destruction of all his hopes, it was of the necessary guard to be observed in his night-walk. The times were dangerous and unsettled; the roads full of disbanded soldiers, and especially of royalists, who made their political opinions a pretext for disturbing the country with marauding parties and robberies. Deer-stealers also, who are ever a desperate banditti, had of late infested Woodstock Chase. In short, the dangers of the place and period were such, that Markham Everard wore his loaded pistols at his belt, and carried his drawn sword under his arm, that he might be prepared for whatever peril should cross his path.

He heard the bells of Woodstock Church ring curfew, just as he was crossing one of the little meadows we have described, and they ceased as he entered an overshadowed and twilight part of the path beyond. It was there that he heard some one whistling; and, as the sound became clearer, it was plain the person was advancing towards him. This could hardly be a friend; for the party to which he belonged rejected, ge-

nerally speaking, all music, unless psalmody. "If a man is merry, let him sing psalms," was a text which they were pleased to interpret as literally as they did some others; yet it was too continued a sound to be a signal amongst night-walkers, and too light and cheerful to argue any purpose of concealment on the part of the traveller, who presently exchanged his whistling for singing, and trolled forth the following stanza to a jolly tune; with which the old cavaliers were wont to wake the night-owl:

Hey for cavaliers! Ho for cavaliers!
Pray for cavaliers!
Rub a dub—rub a dub!
Have at old Beelzebub—
Oliver smokes for fear.

"I should know that voice," said Everard, uncocking the pistol which he had drawn from his belt, but continuing to hold it in his hand. Then came another fragment:

Hash them—slash them—
All to pieces dash them.

"So ho!" cried Markham, "who goes there, and for whom?"

"For Church and King," answered a voice,

which presently added, "No, d—n me—I mean *against* Church and King, and for the people that are uppermost—I forget which they are."

"Roger Wildrake, as I guess?" said Everard.

"The same—Gentleman of Squattlesea-mere, in the moist county of Lincoln."

"Wildrake!" said Markham—"Wildgoose you should be called. You have been moistening your own throat to some purpose, and using it to gabble tunes very suiting to the times, to be sure!"

"Faith, the tune's a pretty tune enough, Mark, only out of fashion a little—the more's the pity."

"What could I expect," said Everard, "but to meet some ranting, drunken cavalier, as desperate and dangerous as night and sack usually make them? What if I had rewarded your melody by a ball in the gullet?"

"Why, there would have been a piper paid—that's all," said Wildrake.—"But wherefore come you this way now?—I was about to seek you at the hut."

"I have been obliged to leave it—I will tell you the cause hereafter," replied Markham.

"What! the old play-hunting cavalier was cross, or Chloe was unkind?"

"Jest not, Wildrake—it is all over with me," said Everard.

"The devil it is," exclaimed Wildrake, "and you take it thus quietly!—Zounds! let us back together—I'll plead your cause for you—I know how to tickle up an old knight and a pretty maiden—Let me alone for putting you *rectus in curia*, you canting rogue.—D—n me, Sir Henry Lee, says I, your nephew is a piece of a Puritan—it won't deny—but I'll uphold him a gentleman and a pretty fellow for all that.—Madam, says I, you may think your cousin looks like a psalm-singing weaver, in that bare felt, and with that rascally brown cloak; that band, which looks like a baby's clout, and those loose boots, which have a whole calf-skin in each of them,—but let him wear on the one side of his head a castor, with a plume befitting his quality; give him a good Toledo by his side, with a broidered belt and an inlaid hilt, instead of the ton of iron contained in that basket-hilted, black Andrew Ferrara; put

a few smart words in his mouth—and, blood and wounds! madam, says I——"

"Prithee, truce with this nonsense, Wildrake," said Everard, "and tell me if you are sober enough to hear a few words of sober reason?"

"Pshaw! man, I did but crack a brace of quarts with yonder puritanic, round-headed soldiers, up yonder at the town; and rat me but I passed myself for the best man of the party; twanged my nose, and turned up my eyes, as I took my can—Pah! the very wine tasted of hypocrisy. I think the rogue corporal smoked something at last—as for the common fellows, never stir, but *they* asked me to say grace over another quart."

"This is just what I wished to speak with you about, Wildrake," said Markham—"You hold me, I am sure, for your friend?"

"True as steel.—Chums at College and at Lincoln's-Inn—we have been Nisus and Euryalus, Theseus and Perithous, Orestes and Pylades; and, to sum up the whole with a puritanic touch, David and Jonathan, all in one breath. Not even politics, the wedge that rends families and friend-

ships asunder, as iron rives oak, have been able to split us."

"True," answered Markham; "and when you followed the King to Nottingham, and I enrolled under Essex, we swore, at our parting, that whichever side was victorious, he of us who adhered to it, should protect his less fortunate comrade."

"Surely, man, surely; and have you not protected me accordingly? Did you not save me from hanging? and am I not indebted to you for the bread I eat?"

"I have but done that which, had the times been otherwise, you, my dear Wildrake, would, I am sure, have done for me. But, as I said, that is just what I wished to speak to you about. Why render the task of protecting you more difficult than it must necessarily be at any rate? Why thrust thyself into the company of soldiers, or such-like, where thou art sure to be warmed into betraying thyself? Why come hollowing and whooping out cavalier ditties, like a drunken trooper of Prince Rupert, or one of Wilmot's swaggering body-guards?"

"Because I may have been both one and t'other in my day, for aught that you know," replied Wildrake. "But, oddsfish! is it necessary I should always be reminding you, that our obligation of mutual protection, our league of offensive and defensive, as I may call it, was to be carried into effect without reference to the politics or religion of the party protected, or the least obligation on him to conform to those of his friend?"

"True," said Everard; "but with this most necessary qualification, that the party should submit to such outward conformity to the times as should make it more easy and safe for his friend to be of service to him. Now, you are perpetually breaking forth, to the hazard of your own safety and my credit."

"I tell you, Mark, and I would tell your namesake the apostle, that you are hard on me. You have practised sobriety and hypocrisy from your hanging sleeves till your Geneva cassock—from cradle to this day,—and it is a thing of nature to you; and you are surprised that a rough, rattling, honest fellow, accustomed to speak

truth all his life, and especially when he found it at the bottom of a flask, cannot be so perfect a prig as thyself.—Zooks! there is no equality betwixt us—A trained diver might as well, because he can retain his breath for ten minutes without inconvenience, upbraid a poor devil for being like to burst in twenty seconds—And, after all, considering the guise is so new to me, I think I bear myself indifferently well—try me!"

"Are there any more news from Worcester fight?" asked Everard, in a tone so serious that it imposed on his companion, who replied in his genuine character—

"Worse!—d—n me, worse an hundred times than reported—totally broken. Noll hath certainly sold himself to the devil, and his lease will have an end one day—that is all our present comfort."

"What! and would this be your answer to the first red-coat who asked the question?" said Everard. "Methinks you would find a speedy passport to the next corps de garde."

"Nay, nay," answered Wildrake, "I thought you asked me in your own person.—Lack-a-

day! a great mercy—a glorifying mercy—a crowning mercy—a vouchsafing—an uplifting—I profess the malignants are scattered from Dan to Beersheba—smitten, hip and thigh, even until the going down of the sun!"

"Hear you aught of Colonel Thornhaugh's wounds?"

"He is dead," answered Wildrake, "that's one comfort—the round-headed rascal!—Nay, hold! it was but a trip of the tongue—I meant, the sweet godly youth."

"And hear you aught of the young man, King of Scotland, as they call him?" said Everard.

"Nothing, but that he is hunted like a partridge on the mountains. May God deliver him, and confound his enemies!—Zoons, Mark Everard, I can fool it no longer. Do you not remember, that at the Lincoln's-Inn gambols—though you did not mingle much in them I think—I used always to play as well as any of them, when it came to the action, but they could never get me to rehearse conformably. It's the same at this day. I hear your voice, and I answer to it

in the true tone of my heart; but when I am in the company of your snuffling friends, you have seen me act my part indifferent well."

"But indifferent, indeed," replied Everard; "however, there is little call on you to do aught, save to be modest and silent. Speak little, and lay aside, if you can, your big oaths and swaggering looks—set your hat even on your brows."

"Ay, that is the curse! I have been always noted for the jaunty manner in which I wear my castor—Hard when a man's merits become his enemies."

"You must remember you are my clerk."

"Secretary," answered Wildrake; "let it be secretary, if you love me."

"It must be clerk, and nothing else—plain clerk—and remember to be civil and obedient," replied Everard.

"But you should not lay on your commands with so much ostentatious superiority, Master Markham Everard. Remember I am your senior of three years standing. Confound me, if I know how to take it!"

"Was ever such a fantastic wronghead?—

For my sake, if not for thine own, bend thy freakish folly to listen to reason. Think that I have incurred both risk and shame on thy account."

"Nay, thou art a right good fellow, Mark," replied the cavalier, "and for thy sake I will do much—but remember to cough, and cry hem! when thou seest me like to break bounds—And now tell me whither we are bound for the night?"

"To Woodstock Lodge, to look after my uncle's property," answered Markham Everard: "I am informed that soldiers have taken possession—Yet how could that be, if thou foundest the party drinking in Woodstock?"

"There was a kind of commissary or steward, or some such rogue, had gone down to the Lodge," replied Wildrake; "I had a peep at him."

"Indeed?" replied Everard.

"Ay, verily, to speak your own language. Why, as I passed through the park in quest of you, scarce half an hour since, I saw a light in the Lodge—Step this way, you will see it yourself."

"In the north-west angle?—It is from a window in what they call Victor Lee's apartment."

"Well," resumed Wildrake, "I had been long one of Lundsford's lads, and well used to patrolling duty—So, rat me, says I, if I leave a light in my rear, without knowing what it means. Besides, Mark, thou hadst said so much to me of thy pretty cousin, I thought I might as well have a peep, if I could."

"Thoughtless, thoughtless, incorrigible young man—to what dangers do you expose yourself and your friends, in mere wantonness!—But go on!"

"By this fair moonshine, I believe thou art jealous, Mark Everard!" replied his gay companion; "there is no occasion; for, in any case, I, who was to see the lady, was steeled by honour against the charms of my friend's Chloe—Then the lady was not to see me, so could make no comparisons to thy disadvantage, thou knowest—Lastly, as it fell out, neither of us saw the other at all."

"Of that I am well aware. Mrs Alice left the Lodge long before sunset, and never returned.

What didst thou see, to introduce with such preface?"

"Nay, no great matter," replied Wildrake; "only getting upon a sort of buttress, (for I can climb like any cat that ever mewed in any gutter,) and holding on by the vines and creepers which grew around, I obtained a station where I could see into the inside of that same parlour thou spokest of just now."

"And what saw'st thou there?" once more demanded Everard.

"Nay, no great matter, as I said before," replied the cavalier; "for in these times it is no new thing to see churls carousing in royal or noble chambers. I saw two rascallions engaged in emptying a solemn stoup of strong waters, and dispatching a huge venison pasty, which, for their convenience, they had placed on a lady's working-table—One of them was trying an air on a lute."

"The profane villains!" exclaimed Everard, "it was Alice's."

"Well said, comrade—I am glad your phlegm can be moved. I did but throw in these incidents

of the lute and the table to try if it was possible to get a spark of human spirit out of you, besanctified as you are."

"What like were the men?" said young Everard.

"The one a slouch-hatted, long-cloaked, sour-faced fanatic, like the rest of you, whom I took to be the steward or commissary I heard spoken of in the town; the other was a short sturdy fellow, with a wood-knife at his girdle, and a long quarter-staff lying beside him—a black-haired knave, with white teeth and a merry countenance—one of the under-rangers or bow-bearers of these walks, I fancy."

"They must have been Desborough's favourite, trusty Tomkins," said Everard, "and Joceline Joliffe, the keeper. Tomkins is Desborough's right hand—an Independent, and hath pourings forth, as he calls them. Some think that his gifts have the better of his grace. I have heard of his abusing opportunities."

"They were improving them when I saw them," replied Wildrake, "and made the bottle smoke for it—when, as the devil would have

it, a stone, which had been dislodged from the crumbling buttress, gave way under my weight. A clumsy fellow like thee would have been so long thinking what was to be done, that he must needs have followed it before he could make up his mind; but I, Mark, I hopped like a squirrel to an ivy twig, and stood fast—was well nigh shot though, for the noise alarmed them both. They looked to the oriel, and saw me on the outside; the fanatic fellow took out a pistol—as they have always such texts in readiness, hanging beside the little clasped Bible, thou know'st—the keeper seized his hunting-pole—I treated them both to a roar and a grin—thou must know I can grimace like a baboon—I learned the trick from a French player, who could twist his jaws into a pair of nut-crackers—and therewithal I dropped myself sweetly on the grass, and ran off so trippingly, keeping the dark side of the wall as long as I could, that I am well nigh persuaded they thought I was their kinsman, the devil, come among them uncalled. They were abominably startled."

"Thou art most fearfully rash, Wildrake,"

said his companion; "we are now bound for the house—what if they should remember thee?"

"Why, it is no treason, is it? No one has paid for peeping since Tom of Coventry's days; and if he came in for a reckoning, belike it was for a better treat than mine. But trust me, they will no more know me, than a man who had only seen your friend Noll at a conventicle of saints, would know the same Oliver on horseback, and charging with his lobster-tailed squadron; or the same Noll cracking a jest and a bottle with wicked Waller the poet."

"Hush! not a word of Oliver, as thou dost value thyself and me. It is ill jesting with the rock you may split on.—But here is the gate—we will disturb these honest gentlemen's recreations."

As he spoke, he applied the large and ponderous knocker to the hall-door.

"Rat-tat-tat-too!" said Wildrake; "there is a fine alarm to you cuckolds and roundheads." He then half-mimicked, half-sung the march so called:—

"Cuckolds, come dig, cuckolds, come dig;
Round about cuckolds, come dance to my jig!"

"By Heaven! this passes Midsummer frenzy," said Everard, turning angrily to him.

"Not a bit, not a bit," replied Wildrake; "it is but a slight expectoration, just like what one makes before beginning a long speech. I will be grave for an hour together, now I have got that point of war out of my head."

As he spoke, steps were heard in the hall, and the wicket of the great door was partly opened, but secured with a chain in case of accidents. The visage of Tomkins, and that of Joceline beneath it, appeared at the chink, illuminated by the lamp which the latter held in his hand, and Tomkins demanded the meaning of this alarm.

"I demand instant admittance!" said Everard. "Joliffe, you know me well?"

"I do, sir," replied Joceline, "and could admit you with all my heart; but, alas! sir, you see I am not key-keeper—Here is the gentleman whose warrant I must walk by—The Lord help me, seeing times are such as they be!"

"And when that gentleman, who I think may be Master Desborough's valet——"

"His honour's unworthy secretary, an it please you," interposed Tomkins; while Wildrake whispered in Everard's ear, "I will be no longer secretary. Mark, thou wert quite right—the clerk must be the more gentlemanly calling."

"And if you are Master Desborough's secretary, I presume you know me and my condition well enough," said Everard, addressing the Independent, "not to hesitate to admit me and my attendant to a night's quarters in the Lodge?"

"Surely not, surely not," said the Independent—"that is, if your worship thinks you would be better accommodated here than up at the house of entertainment in the town, which men unprofitably call Saint George's Inn. There is but confined accommodation here, your honour—and we have been frayed out of our lives already by the visitation of Satan—albeit his fiery dart is now quenched."

"This may be all well in its place, Sir Secretary," said Everard; "and you may find a corner for it when you are next tempted to play the

preacher. But I will take it for no apology for keeping me here in the cold harvest wind; and if not presently received, and suitably too, I will report you to your master for insolence in your office."

The secretary of Desborough did not dare offer farther opposition; for it was well known that Desborough himself only held his consequence as a kinsman of Cromwell, and the Lord General, who was well nigh paramount already, was known to be strongly favourable both to the elder and younger Everard. It is true, they were Presbyterians and he an Independent; and that, though sharing those feelings of correct morality and more devoted religious feeling, by which, with few exceptions, the Parliamentarian party were distinguished, the Everards were not disposed to carry these attributes to the extreme of enthusiasm, practised by so many others at the time. Yet it was well known that whatever might be Cromwell's own religious creed, he was not uniformly bounded by it in the choice of his favourites, but extended his countenance to those who could serve him, even although, according to the

phrase of the time, they came out of the darkness of Egypt. The character of the elder Everard stood very high for wisdom and sagacity; besides, being of a good family and competent fortune, his adherence would lend a dignity to any side he might espouse. Then his son had been a distinguished and successful soldier, remarkable for the discipline he maintained among his men, the bravery which he showed in the time of action, and the humanity with which he was always ready to qualify the consequences of victory. Such men were not to be neglected, when many signs combined to show that the parties in the state, who had successfully accomplished the deposition and death of the king, were speedily to quarrel among themselves about the division of the spoils. The two Everards were therefore much courted by Cromwell, and their influence with him supposed to be so great, that trusty Mr Secretary Tomkins cared not to expose himself to risk, by contending with Colonel Everard for such a trifle as a night's lodging.

Joceline was active on his side—more lights were obtained—more wood thrown on the fire—

and the two newly-arrived strangers were introduced into Victor Lee's parlour, as it was called, from the picture over the chimney-piece, which we have already described. It was several minutes ere Colonel Everard could recover his general stoicism of deportment, so strongly he was impressed by finding himself in the apartment, under whose roof he had passed so many of the happiest hours of his life. There was the cabinet, which he had seen opened with such feelings of delight when Sir Henry Lee deigned to give him instructions in fishing, and to exhibit hooks and lines, together with all the materials for making the artificial fly, then little known. There hung the ancient family picture, which, from some odd mysterious expressions of his uncle, relating to it, had become to his boyhood, nay, his early youth, a subject of curiosity and of fear. He remembered how, when left alone in the apartment, the searching eye of the old warrior seemed always bent upon his, in whatever part of the room he placed himself, and how his childish imagination was perturbed at a phenomenon, for which he could not account.

With these came a thousand more dear and warmer recollections of his early attachment to his pretty cousin Alice, when he aided at her lessons, brought water for her flowers, or accompanied her while she sung; and he remembered that while her father looked at them with a good-humoured and careless smile, he had once heard him mutter, "And if it should turn out so—why it might be best for both," and the theories of happiness he had reared on these words. All these visions had been dispelled by the trumpet of war, which called Sir Henry Lee and himself to opposite sides; and the transactions of this very day had shown, that even Everard's success as a soldier and a statesman seemed absolutely to prohibit the chance of their being revived.

He was waked out of this unpleasing reverie by the approach of Joceline, who, being possibly a seasoned toper, had made the additional arrangements with more expedition and accuracy than could have been expected from a person engaged as he had been since night-fall.

He now wished to know the Colonel's directions for the night.

"Would he eat anything?"

"No."

"Did his honour choose to accept Sir Henry Lee's bed, which was ready prepared?"

"Yes."

"That of Mistress Alice Lee should be prepared for the Secretary."

"On pain of thine ears—No," replied Everard.

"Where then was the worthy Secretary to be quartered?"

"In the dog-kennel, if you list," replied Colonel Everard; "but," added he, stepping to the sleeping-apartment of Alice, which opened from the parlour, locking it, and taking out the key, "no one shall profane this chamber."

"Had his honour any other commands for the night?"

"None, save to clear the apartment of yonder man.—My clerk will remain with me—I have orders which must be written out.—Yet stay—Thou gavest my letter this morning to Mistress Alice?"

"I did."

"Tell me, good Joceline, what she said when she received it?"

"She seemed much concerned, sir; and indeed I think that she wept a little—but indeed she seemed very much distressed."

"And what message did she send to me?"

"None, may it please your honour—She began to say, 'Tell my cousin Everard that I will communicate my uncle's kind purpose to my father, if I can get fitting opportunity—but that I greatly fear'—and there checked herself, as it were, and said, 'I will write to my cousin; and as it may be late ere I have an opportunity of speaking with my father, do thou come for my answer after service.'—So I went to church myself, to while away the time; but when I returned to the chase, I found this man had summoned my master to surrender, and right or wrong I must put him in possession of the Lodge. I would fain have given your honour a hint that the old knight and my young mistress were like to take you on the form, but I could not mend the matter."

"Thou hast done well, good fellow, and I will

remember thee.—And now, my masters," he said, advancing to the brace of clerks or secretaries, who had in the meanwhile sate quietly down beside the stone-bottle, and made up acquaintance over a glass of its contents—" Let me remind you," said the Colonel, " that the night wears late."

" There is something cries tinkle, tinkle, in the bottle yet," said Wildrake in reply.

" Hem ! hem ! hem !" coughed the Colonel of the parliamentarian service; and if his lips did not curse his companion's imprudence, I will not answer for what arose in his heart.—" Well !" he said, observing that Wildrake had filled his own glass and Tomkins's, " take that parting glass and begone."

" Would you not be pleased to hear first," said Wildrake, " how this honest gentleman saw the devil to-night look through a pane of yonder window, and how he thinks he had a mighty strong resemblance to your worship's humble slave and varlet scribbler ? Would you but hear this, sir, and just sip a glass of this very recommendable strong waters?"

"I will drink none, sir," said Colonel Everard sternly; "and I have to tell *you*, that you have drunken a glass too much already.—Mr Tompkins, sir, I wish you good night."

"A word in season at parting," said Tompkins, standing up behind the long leathern back of a chair, hemming and snuffling as if preparing for an exhortation.

"Excuse me, sir," replied Markham Everard sternly; "you are not now sufficiently yourself to guide the devotion of others."

"Woe be to them that reject!" said the Secretary of the Commissioners, stalking out of the room—the rest was lost in shutting the door, or suppressed for fear of offence.

"And now, fool Wildrake, begone to thy bed—yonder it lies," pointing to the knight's apartment.

"What, thou hast secured the lady's for thyself? I saw thee put the key in thy pocket."

"I would not—indeed I could not sleep in that apartment—I can sleep nowhere—but I will watch in this armed chair.—I have made him place wood for repairing the fire.—Good now, go to bed thyself, and sleep off thy liquor."

"Liquor!—I laugh thee to scorn, Mark—thou art a milksop, and the son of a milksop, and know'st not what a good fellow can do in the way of crushing an honest cup."

"The whole vices of his faction are in this poor fellow individually," said the Colonel to himself, eying his protegé askance, as the other retreated into the bed-room with no very steady pace—"He is reckless, intemperate, dissolute; and if I cannot get him safely shipped for France, he will certainly be both his own ruin and mine.—Yet, withal, he is kind, brave, and generous, and would have kept the faith with me which he now expects from me; and in what consists the merit of our truth, if we observe not our plighted word when we have promised to our hurt? I will take the liberty, however, to secure myself against farther interruption on his part."

So saying, he locked the door of communication betwixt the sleeping-room, to which the cavalier had retreated, and the parlour;—and then, after pacing the floor thoughtfully, returned to his seat, trimmed the lamp, and drew out a number of letters.—"I will read these over once

more," he said, "that, if possible, the thought of public affairs may expel this keen sense of personal sorrow. Gracious Providence, where is this to end? We have sacrificed the peace of our families, the warmest wishes of our young hearts, to right the country in which we were born, and to free her from oppression; yet it appears, that every step we have made towards liberty, has but brought us in view of new and more terrific perils, as he who travels in a mountainous region, is, by every step which elevates him highest, placed in a situation of more imminent hazard."

He read long and attentively, various tedious and embarrassed letters, in which the writers, placing before him the glory of God, and the freedom and liberties of England, as their supreme ends, could not, by all the ambagitory expressions they made use of, prevent the shrewd eye of Markham Everard from seeing, that self-interest and views of ambition were the principal moving springs at the bottom of their plots.

CHAPTER VI.

Sleep steals on us even like his brother Death—
We know not when it comes—we know it must come—
We may affect to scorn and to contemn it,
For 'tis the highest pride of human misery
To say it knows not of an opiate:
Yet the reft parent, the despairing lover,
Even the poor wretch who waits for execution,
Feels this oblivion, against which he thought
His woes had armed his senses, steal upon him,
And through the fenceless citadel—the body,
Surprise that haughty garrison—the mind.

HERBERT.

COLONEL EVERARD experienced the truth contained in the verses of the quaint old bard whom we have quoted above. Amid private grief, and anxiety for a country long a prey to civil war, and not likely to fall soon under any fixed or well-established form of government, Everard and his father had, like many others, turned their eyes to General Cromwell, as the person whose valour had made him the darling of the army, whose strong sagacity had hitherto predominated over the high talents by which he had been assailed

in Parliament, as well as over his enemies in the field, and who was alone in the situation to *settle the nation*, as the phrase then went; or, in other words, to dictate the mode of government. The father and son were both reputed to stand high in the General's favour. But Markham Everard was conscious of some particulars, which induced him to doubt whether Cromwell actually, and at heart, bore either to his father or to himself that good-will which was generally believed. He knew him for a profound politician, who could veil for any length of time his real sentiments of men and things, until they could be displayed without prejudice to his interest. And he moreover knew that the General was not likely to forget the opposition which the Presbyterian party had offered to what Oliver called the Great Matter—the trial, namely, and execution of the King. In this opposition, his father and he had anxiously concurred, nor had the arguments, nor even the half-expressed threats of Cromwell, induced them to flinch from that course, far less to permit their names to be introduced into the commission nominated to sit in judgment on that memorable occasion.

This hesitation had occasioned some temporary coldness between the General and the Everards, father and son. But as the latter remained in the army, and bore arms under Cromwell both in Scotland, and finally at Worcester, his services very frequently called forth the approbation of his commander. After the fight of Worcester, in particular, he was among the number of those officers on whom Oliver, rather considering the actual and practical extent of his own power, than the name under which he exercised it, was with difficulty withheld from imposing the dignity of Knights Bannerets at his own will and pleasure. It therefore seemed, that all recollection of former disagreement was obliterated, and that the Everards had regained their former stronghold in the General's affections. There were, indeed, several who doubted this, and who endeavoured to bring over this distinguished young officer to some other of the parties which divided the infant Commonwealth. But to these proposals he turned a deaf ear. Enough of blood, he said, had been spilled—it was time that the nation should have repose under a firmly-established govern-

ment, of strength sufficient to protect property, and of lenity enough to encourage the return of tranquillity. This, he thought, could only be accomplished by means of Cromwell, and the greater part of England was of the same opinion. It was true, that, in thus submitting to the domination of a successful soldier, those who did so, forgot the principles upon which they had drawn the sword against the late King. But in revolutions, stern and high principles are often obliged to give way to the current of existing circumstances; and in many a case, where wars have been waged for points of metaphysical right, they have been at last gladly terminated, upon the mere hope of obtaining general tranquillity, as, after many a long siege, a garrison is often glad to submit on mere security for life and limb.

Colonel Everard, therefore, felt that the support which he afforded Cromwell, was only under the idea, that, amid a choice of evils, the least was likely to ensue from a man of the General's wisdom and valour being placed at the head of the state; and he was sensible, that Oliver himself was likely to consider his attachment as luke-

warm and imperfect, and measure his gratitude for it upon the same limited scale.

In the meanwhile, however, circumstances compelled him to make trial of the General's friendship. The sequestration of Woodstock, and the warrant to the commissioners to dispose of it as national property, had been long granted, but the interest of the elder Everard had for weeks and months deferred its execution. The hour was now approaching when the blow could be no longer parried, especially as Sir Henry Lee, on his side, resisted every proposal of submitting himself to the existing government, and was therefore, now that his hour of grace was passed, enrolled in the list of stubborn and irreclaimable malignants, with whom the Council of State was determined no longer to keep terms. The only mode of protecting the old knight and his daughter, was to interest, if possible, the General himself in the matter; and revolving all the circumstances connected with their intercourse, Colonel Everard felt that a request, which would so immediately interfere with the interests of Desborough, the brother-in-law of Cromwell, and one of the pre-

sent Commissioners, was putting to a very severe trial the friendship of the latter. Yet no alternative remained.

With this view, and agreeably to a request from Cromwell, who at parting had been very urgent to have his written opinion upon public affairs, Colonel Everard passed the earlier part of the night in arranging his ideas upon the state of the Commonwealth, in a plan which he thought likely to be acceptable to Cromwell, as it exhorted him, under the aid of Providence, to become the saviour of the state, by convoking a free Parliament, and by their aid placing himself at the head of some form of liberal and established government, which might supersede the estate of anarchy, in which the nation was otherwise likely to be merged. Taking a general view of the totally broken condition of the Royalists, and of the various factions which now convulsed the state, he showed how this might be done without bloodshed or violence. From this topic he descended to the propriety of keeping up the becoming state of the Executive Government, in whose hands soever it should be lodged, and thus showed Cromwell, as the future Stadtholder, or Consul, or Lieutenant-

General of Great Britain and Ireland, a prospect of demesne and residencies becoming his dignity. Then he naturally passed to the disparking and destroying of the royal residences of England, made a woful picture of the demolition which impended over Woodstock, and interceded for the preservation of that beautiful Seat, as a matter of personal favour, in which he found himself deeply interested.

Colonel Everard, when he had finished his letter, did not find himself greatly risen in his own opinion. In the course of his political conduct, he had till this hour avoided mixing up personal motives with his public grounds of action, and yet he now felt himself making such a composition. But he comforted himself, or at least silenced this unpleasing recollection, with the consideration, that the weal of Britain, studied under the aspect of the times, absolutely required that Cromwell should be at the head of the government; and that the interest of Sir Henry Lee, or rather his safety and his existence, no less emphatically demanded the preservation of Woodstock, and his residence there. Was it a fault of his, that

the same road should lead to both these ends, or that his private interest, and that of the country, should happen to mix in the same letter? He hardened himself, therefore, to the act, made up and addressed his packet to the Lord General, and then sealed it with his seal of arms. This done, he lay back in his chair; and, in spite of his expectations to the contrary, fell asleep in the course of his reflections, anxious and harassing as they were, and did not awaken until the cold grey light of dawn was peeping through the eastern oriel.

He started at first, rousing himself with the sensation of one who awakes in a place unknown to him; but the localities instantly forced themselves on his recollection. The lamp burning dimly in the socket, the wood-fire almost extinguished in its own white embers, the gloomy picture over the chimney-piece, the sealed packet on the table—all reminded him of the events of yesterday, and his deliberations of the succeeding night.

"There is no help for it," he said; "it must be Cromwell or anarchy. And probably the sense, that his title, as head of the Executive Govern-

ment, is derived merely from popular consent, may check the too natural proneness of power to render itself arbitrary. If he govern by Parliaments, and with regard to the privileges of the subject, wherefore not Oliver as well as Charles? But I must take measures for having this conveyed safely to the hands of this future sovereign prince. It will be well to take the first word of influence with him, since there must be many who will not hesitate to recommend counsels more violent and precipitate."

He determined to intrust the important packet to the charge of Wildrake, whose rashness was never so distinguished, as when by any chance he was left idle and unemployed; besides, even if his faith had not been otherwise unimpeachable, the obligations which he owed to his friend Everard must have rendered it such.

These conclusions passed through Colonel Everard's mind, as, collecting the remains of wood in the chimney, he gathered them into a hearty blaze, to remove the uncomfortable feeling of chillness which pervaded his limbs; and by the time he was a little more warm, again sunk into a slumber

which was only dispelled by the beams of morning peeping into his apartment.

He arose, roused himself, walked up and down the room, and looked from the large oriel windows on the nearest objects, which were the untrimmed hedges and neglected walks of a certain wilderness, as it is called in ancient treatises on gardening, which, kept of yore well ordered, and in all the pride of the topiary art, presented a succession of yew trees cut into fantastic forms, of close alleys, and of open walks, filling about two or three acres of ground on that side of the Lodge, and forming a boundary between its immediate precincts and the open Park. Its enclosure was now broken down in many places, and the hinds with their fawns fed free and unstartled up to the very windows of the sylvan palace.

This had been a favourite scene of Markham's sports when a boy. He could still distinguish, though now grown out of shape, the verdant battlements of a Gothic castle, all created by the gardener's shears, at which he was accustomed to shoot his arrows, or; stalking before it like the Knight-errant of whom he read, was wont to

blow his horn, and bid defiance to the supposed giant or Paynim knight, by whom it was garrisoned. He remembered how he used to train his cousin, though several years younger than himself, to bear a part in these revels of his boyish fancy, and to play the character of an elfin page, or a fairy, or an enchanted princess. He remembered, too, many particulars of their later acquaintance, from which he had been almost necessarily led to the conclusion, that from an early period their parents had entertained some idea, that there might be a well-fitted match betwixt his fair cousin and himself. A thousand visions formed in so bright a prospect had vanished along with it, but now returned like shadows, to remind him of all he had lost—and for what? —"For the sake of England," his proud consciousness replied,—"Of England, in danger of becoming the prey at once of bigotry and tyranny." And he strengthened himself with the recollection, "If I have sacrificed my private happiness, it is that my country may enjoy liberty of conscience, and personal freedom; which, under

a weak prince and usurping statesmen, she was but too likely to have lost."

But the busy fiend in his breast would not be repulsed by the bold answer. "Has thy resistance," it demanded, "availed thy country, Markham Everard? Lies not England, after so much bloodshed, and so much misery, as low beneath the sword of a fortunate soldier as formerly under the sceptre of an encroaching prince? Are Parliament, or what remains of them, fitted to contend with a leader, master of his soldiers' hearts, as bold and subtle as he is impenetrable in his designs? This General, who holds the army, and by that the fate of the nation in his hand, will he lay down his power because philosophy would pronounce it his duty to become a subject?"

He dared not answer that his knowledge of Cromwell authorized him to expect any such act of self-denial. Yet still he considered that in times of such infinite difficulty, that must be the best government, however little desirous in itself, which should most speedily restore peace to the land, and stop the wounds which the con-

tending parties were daily inflicting on each other. He imagined that Cromwell was the only authority under which a steady government could be formed, and therefore had attached himself to his fortune, though not without considerable and recurring doubts, how far serving the views of this impenetrable and mysterious General was consistent with the principles under which he had assumed arms.

While these things passed in his mind, Everard looked upon the packet which lay on the table addressed to the Lord General, and which he had made up before sleep. He hesitated several times, when he remembered its purport, and in what degree he must stand committed with that personage, and bound to support his plans of aggrandizement, when once that communication was in Oliver Cromwell's possession.

"Yet it must be so," he said at last, with a deep sigh. "Among the contending parties, he is the strongest—the wisest and most moderate—and ambitious though he be, perhaps not the most dangerous. Some one must be trusted with power to prese rve and enforce general order, and

who can possess or wield such power like him that is head of the victorious armies of England? Come what will in future, peace and the restoration of law ought to be our first and most pressing object. This remnant of a Parliament cannot keep their ground against the army, by mere appeal to the sanction of opinion. If they design to reduce the soldiery, it must be by actual warfare, and the land has been too long steeped in blood. But Cromwell may, and I trust will, make a moderate accommodation with them, on grounds by which peace may be preserved; and it is to this which we must look and trust for a settlement of the kingdom, alas! and for the chance of protecting my obstinate kinsman from the consequences of his honest though absurd pertinacity."

Silencing some internal feelings of doubt and reluctance by such reasoning as this, Markham Everard continued in his resolution to unite himself with Cromwell in the struggle which was evidently approaching betwixt the civil and military authorities; not as the course which, if at perfect liberty, he would have preferred adopting, but as the best choice between two dangerous

extremities to which the times had reduced him. He could not help trembling, however, when he recollected that his father, though hitherto the admirer of Cromwell, as the implement by whom so many marvels had been wrought in England, might not be disposed to unite with his interest against that of the Long Parliament, of which he had been, till partly laid aside by continued indisposition, an active and leading member. This doubt also he was obliged to swallow, or strangle, as he might; but consoling himself with the ready argument, that it was impossible his father could see matters in another light than that in which they occurred to himself.

CHAPTER VII.

DETERMINED at length to dispatch his packet to the General without delay, Colonel Everard approached the door of the apartment, in which, as was evident from the dead breathing within, the prisoner Wildrake enjoyed a deep slumber, under the influence of liquor at once and of fatigue. In turning the key, the bolt, which was rather rusty, made a resistance so noisy, as partly to attract the sleeper's attention, though not to awake him. Everard stood by his bed-side, as he heard him mutter, "Is it morning already, jailor?—Why, you dog, an' you had but a cast of humanity in you, you would qualify your vile news with a cup of sack,—hanging is sorry work, my masters—and sorrow's dry."

"Up, Wildrake—up, thou ill-omened dreamer," said his friend, shaking him by the collar.

"Hands off!" answered the sleeper.—"I can climb a ladder without help, I trow."—He then sate up in the bed, and opening his eyes, stared around him, and exclaimed, "Zounds! Mark, is it only thou? I thought it was all over with me—fetters were struck from my legs—rope drawn round my gullet—irons knocked off my hands—hempen cravat tucked on—all ready for a dance in the open element upon slight footing."

"Truce with thy folly, Wildrake; sure the devil of drink, to whom thou hast, I think, sold thyself——"

"For a hogshead of sack," interrupted Wildrake; "the bargain was made in a cellar in the vintry."

"I am as mad as thou art, to trust anything to thee," said Markham; "I scarce believe thou hast thy senses yet."

"What should ail me?" said Wildrake—"I trust I have not tasted liquor in my sleep, saving that I dreamed of drinking small-beer with Old Noll, of his own brewing.—But do not look so glum, man—I am the same Roger Wildrake that I ever was; as wild as a mallard, but as true

as a gamecock. I am thine own chum, man—bound to thee by thy kind deeds—*devinctus beneficio*—there is Latin for it; and where is the thing thou wilt charge me with, that I will not, or dare not execute, were it to pick the devil's teeth with my rapier, after he had breakfasted upon roundheads?"

"You will drive me mad," said Everard.—"When I am about to intrust all I have most valuable on earth to your management, your conduct and language are those of a mere Bedlamite. Last night I made allowance for thy drunken fury; but who can endure thy morning madness?—it is unsafe for thyself and me, Wildrake—it is unkind—I might say ungrateful."

"Nay, do not say *that*, my friend," said the cavalier, with some show of feeling; "and do not judge of me with a severity that cannot apply to such as I am. We who have lost our all in these sad jars, who are compelled to shift for our living, not from day to day, but from meal to meal—we whose only hiding-place is the jail, whose prospect of final repose is the gallows,—what can'st thou expect from us, but to bear such a lot with

a light heart, since we should break down under it with a heavy one?"

This was spoken in a tone of feeling which found a responding string in Everard's bosom. He took his friend's hand, and pressed it kindly.

"Nay, if I seemed harsh to thee, Wildrake, I profess it was for thine own sake more than mine. I know thou hast at the bottom of thy levity, as deep a principle of honour and feeling as ever governed a human heart. But thou art thoughtless—thou art rash—and I protest to thee, that wert thou to betray thyself in this matter in which I trust thee, the evil consequences to myself would not afflict me more than the thought of putting thee into such danger."

"Nay, if you take it on that tone, Mark," said the cavalier, making an effort to laugh, evidently that he might conceal a tendency to a different emotion, "thou wilt make children of us both—babes and sucklings, by the hilt of this bilbo.—Come, trust me; I can be cautious when time requires it—no man ever saw me drink when an alert was expected—and not one poor pint of wine will I taste until I have managed

this matter for thee. Well, I am thy secretary—clerk—I had forgot—and carry thy dispatches to Cromwell, taking good heed not to be surprised or choused out of my lump of loyalty, (striking his finger on the packet,) and I am to deliver it to the most loyal hands to which it is most humbly addressed—Adzooks, Mark, think of it a moment longer—Surely thou wilt not carry thy perverseness so far, as to strike in with this bloody-minded rebel?—Bid me give him three inches of my dudgeon-dagger, and I will do it much more willingly than present him with thy packet."

"Go to," replied Everard, "this is beyond our bargain. If you will help me, it is well; if not, let me lose no time in debating with thee, since I think every moment an age till the packet is in the General's possession. It is the only way left me to obtain some protection, and a place of refuge for my uncle and his daughter."

"That being the case," said the cavalier, "I will not spare the spur. My nag up yonder at the town will be ready for the road in a trice, and thou mayst reckon on my being with Old

Noll—thy General I mean—in as short time as man and horse may consume betwixt Woodstock and Windsor, where I think I shall for the present find thy friend keeping possession where he has slain."

"Hush, not a word of that. Since we parted last night, I have shaped thee a path which will suit thee better than to assume the decency of language, and of outward manner, of which thou hast so little. I have acquainted the General that thou hast been by bad example and bad education——"

"Which is to be interpreted by contraries, I hope," said Wildrake; "for sure I have been as well born and bred up as any lad of Leicestershire might desire."

"Now, I prithee hush—thou hast, I say, by bad example become at one time a Malignant, and mixed in the party of the late King. But seeing what things were wrought in the nation by the General, thou hast come to a clearness touching his calling to be a great implement in the settlement of these distracted kingdoms. This account of thee will not only lead him to pass

over some of thy eccentricities, should they break out in spite of thee, but will also give thee an interest with him as being more especially attached to his own person."

"Doubtless," said Wildrake, "as every fisher loves best the trouts that are of his own tickling."

"It is likely, I think, he will send thee hither with letters to me," said the Colonel, "enabling me to put a stop to the proceedings of these sequestrators, and to give poor old Sir Henry Lee permission to linger out his days among the oaks he loves to look upon. I have made it my request to him, and I think my father's friendship and my own may stretch so far on his regard without risk of cracking, especially standing matters as they now do—thou dost understand?"

"Entirely well," said the cavalier; "stretch, quotha!—I would rather stretch a rope than hold commerce with the old King-killing ruffian. But I have said I will be guided by thee, Markham, and rat me but I will."

"Be cautious then," said Everard, "mark well what he does and says—more especially what

he does; for Oliver is one of those whose mind is better known by his actions than by his words —and stay—I warrant thee thou wert setting off without a cross in thy purse?"

"Too true, Mark," said Wildrake, "the last noble melted last night amongst yonder black-guard troopers of yours."

"Well, Roger," replied the Colonel, "that is easily mended." So saying, he slipped his purse into his friend's hand. "But art thou not an inconsequential weather-brained fellow, to set forth as thou wert about to do without anything to bear thy charges—what could'st thou have done?"

"Faith, I never thought of that—I must have cried *Stand*, I suppose, to the first pursy townsman, or greasy grazier, that I met o' the heath—it is many a good fellow's shift in these bad times."

"Go to," said Everard; "be cautious—use none of your loose acquaintance—rule your tongue—beware of the wine-pot—for there is little danger if thou could'st only but keep thyself sober—Be moderate in speech, and forbear oaths or vaunting."

"In short, metamorphose myself into such a

prig as thou art, Mark.—Well," said Wildrake, "so far as outside will go, I think I can make a *Hope-on-high Bomby** as well as thou canst. Ah! those were merry days when we saw Mills present Bomby at the Fortune play-house, Mark, ere I had lost my laced cloak and the jewel in my ear, or thou hadst gotten the wrinkle on thy brow, and the puritanic twist of thy mustachio!"

"They were like most worldly pleasures, Wildrake," replied Everard, "sweet in the mouth and bitter in digestion.—But away with thee; and when thou bring'st back my answer, thou wilt find me either here or at Saint George's Inn, at the little borough.—Good luck to thee—Be but cautious how thou bearest thyself."

The Colonel remained in deep meditation.—"I think," he said, "I have not pledged myself too far to the General. A breach between him and the Parliament seems inevitable, and would throw England back into civil war, of which all men are wearied. He may dislike my messenger

* A puritanic character in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays.

—yet that I do not greatly fear. He knows I would choose such as I can myself depend on, and hath dealt enough with the stricter sort to be aware that there are among them, as well as elsewhere, men who can hide two faces under one hood."

CHAPTER VIII.

For there in lofty air was seen to stand
The stern Protector of the conquer'd land;
Drawn in that look with which he wept and swore,
Turn'd out the members, and made fast the door
Ridding the house of every knave and drone,
Forced—though it griev'd his soul—to rule alone.
The Frank Courtship.—CRABBE.

LEAVING Colonel Everard to his meditations, we follow the jolly cavalier, his companion, who, before mounting at the George, did not fail to treat himself to his morning-draught of eggs and muscadine, to enable him to face the harvest wind.

Although he had suffered himself to be sunk in the extravagant license which was practised by the cavaliers, as if to oppose their conduct in every point to the preciseness of their enemies,

yet Wildrake, well-born and well-educated, and endowed with good natural parts, and a heart which even debauchery, and the wild life of a roaring cavalier, had not been able entirely to corrupt, moved on his present embassy with a strange mixture of feelings, such as perhaps he had never in his life before experienced.

His feelings as a royalist led him to detest Cromwell, whom in other circumstances he would scarce have wished to see, except in a field of battle, where he could have had the pleasure to exchange pistol-shots with him. But with this hatred there was mixed a certain degree of fear. Always victorious wherever he fought, the remarkable person whom Wildrake was now approaching had acquired that influence over the minds of his enemies, which constant success is so apt to inspire —they dreaded while they hated him—and joined to these feelings, was a restless meddling curiosity, which made a particular feature in Wildrake's character, who, having long had little business of his own, and caring nothing about that which he had, was easily attracted by the desire

of seeing whatever was curious or interesting around him.

"I should like to see the old rascal after all," he said, "were it but to say that I had seen him."

He reached Windsor in the afternoon, and felt on his arrival the strongest inclination to take up his residence at some of his old haunts, when he had occasionally frequented that fair town in gayer days. But resisting all temptations of this kind, he went courageously to the principal inn, from which its ancient emblem, the Garter, had long disappeared. The master, too, whom Wildrake, experienced in his knowledge of landlords and hostelries, had remembered a dashing Mine Host of Queen Bess's school, had now sobered down to the temper of the times, shook his head when he spoke of the Parliament, wielded his spigot with the gravity of a priest conducting a sacrifice, wished England a happy issue out of all her afflictions, and greatly lauded his Excellency the Lord General. Wildrake also remarked, that his wine was better than it was wont to be, the Puritans having an excellent gift at detecting every fallacy in that matter;

and that his measures were less, and his charges larger—circumstances which he was induced to attend to, by mine host talking a good deal about his conscience.

He was told by this important personage, that the Lord General received frankly all sorts of persons; and that he might obtain access to him next morning, at eight o'clock, for the trouble of presenting himself at the castle-gate, and announcing himself as the bearer of dispatches to his Excellency.

To the Castle, the disguised cavalier repaired at the hour appointed. Admittance was freely permitted to him by the red-coated soldier, who, with austere looks, and his musket on his shoulder, mounted guard at the external gate of that noble building. Wildrake passed through the under-ward or court, gazing as he passed upon the beautiful Chapel, which had but lately received, in darkness and silence, the unhonoured remains of the slaughtered King of England. Rough as Wildrake was, the recollection of this circumstance affected him so strongly, that he had nearly turned back in a sort of horror,

rather than face the dark and daring man, to whom, amongst all the actors in that melancholy affair, its tragic conclusion was chiefly to be imputed. But he felt the necessity of subduing all sentiments of this nature, and compelled himself to proceed in a negotiation intrusted to his conduct by one to whom he was so much obliged as Colonel Everard. At the ascent, which passed by the Round Tower, he looked to the ensign-staff, from which the banner of England was wont to float. It was gone, with all its rich emblazonry, its gorgeous quarterings, and splendid embroidery; and in its room waved that of the Commonwealth, the cross of Saint George, in its colours of blue and red, not yet intersected by the diagonal cross of Scotland, which was soon after assumed, in evidence of England's conquest over her ancient enemy. This change of ensigns increased the train of his gloomy reflections, in which, although contrary to his wont, he became so deeply wrapped, that the first thing which recalled him to himself, was the challenge from the sentinel, accompanied with a stroke of the butt of his musket on the

pavement, with an emphasis which made Wildrake start.

"Whither away, and who are you?"

"The bearer of a packet," answered Wildrake, "to the worshipful the Lord General."

"Stand till I call the officer of the guard."

The corporal made his appearance, distinguished above those of his command by a double quantity of band round his neck, a double height of steeple-crowned hat, a larger allowance of cloak, and a treble proportion of sour gravity of aspect. It might be read on his countenance, that he was one of those tremendous enthusiasts to whom Oliver owed his conquests, whose religious zeal made them even more than a match for the high-spirited and high-born cavaliers, who exhausted their valour in vain in defence of their sovereign's person and crown. He looked with grave solemnity at Wildrake, as if he was making in his own mind an inventory of his features and dress; and having fully perused them, he required "to know his business."

"My business," said Wildrake, as firmly as he could—for the close investigation of this man had

given him some unpleasant nervous sensations—"my business is with your General."

"With his Excellency the Lord General, thou would'st say?" replied the corporal. "Thy speech, my friend, savours too little of the reverence due to his Excellency."

"D—n his Excellency," was at the lips of the cavalier; but prudence kept guard, and permitted not the offensive words to escape the barrier. He only bowed, and was silent.

"Follow me," said the starched figure whom he addressed; and Wildrake followed him accordingly into the guard-house, which exhibited an interior characteristic of the times, and very different from what such military stations present at the present day.

By the fire sat two or three musketeers, listening to one who was expounding some religious mystery to them. He began half beneath his breath, but in tones of great volubility, which tones, as he approached the conclusion, became sharp and eager, as challenging either instant answer or silent acquiescence. The audience seemed to listen to the speaker with immovable features, only answering him with clouds of tobacco-smoke, which

they rolled from under their thick mustachios. On a bench lay a soldier on his face; whether asleep, or in a fit of contemplation, it was impossible to decide. In the midst of the floor stood an officer, as he seemed by his embroidered shoulder-belt and scarf round his waist, otherwise very plainly attired, who was engaged in drilling a stout bumpkin, lately enlisted, to the manual, as it was then used. The motions and words of command were twenty at the very least; and until they were regularly brought to an end, the corporal did not permit Wildrake either to sit down or move forward beyond the threshold of the guard-house. So he had to listen in succession to—Poize your musket—Rest your musket—Cock your musket—Handle your primers—and many other forgotten words of discipline, until at length the words, "Order your musket," ended the drill for the time.

"Thy name, friend?" said the officer to the recruit, when the lesson was over.

"Ephraim," answered the fellow with an affected twang through the nose.

"And what besides Ephraim?"

"Ephraim Cobb, from the godly city of Glocester, where I have dwelt for seven years, serving apprentice to a praise-worthy cordwainer."

"It is a goodly craft," answered the officer; "but casting in thy lot with ours, doubt not that thou shalt be set beyond thine awl, and thy last to boot."

A grim smile of the speaker accompanied this poor attempt at a pun; and then turning round to the corporal, who stood two paces off, with the face of one who seemed desirous of speaking, said, "How now, corporal, what tidings?"

"Here is one with a packet, and please your Excellency," said the corporal—"Surely my spirit does not rejoice in him, seeing I esteem him as a wolf in sheep's clothing."

By these words, Wildrake learned that he was in the actual presence of the remarkable person to whom he was commissioned; and he paused to consider in what manner he ought to address him.

The figure of Oliver Cromwell was, as is generally known, in no way prepossessing. He was of middle stature, strong and coarsely made, with harsh and severe features, indicative, how-

ever, of much natural sagacity and depth of thought. His eyes were grey and piercing; his nose too large in proportion to his other features.

His manner of speaking, when he had the purpose to make himself distinctly understood, was energetic and forcible, though neither graceful nor eloquent. No man could on such occasion put his meaning into fewer and more decisive words. But when, as it often happened, he had a mind to play the orator, for the benefit of people's ears, without enlightening their understanding, Cromwell was wont to invest his meaning, or that which seemed to be his meaning, in such a mist of words, surrounding it with so many exclusions and exceptions, and fortifying it with such a labyrinth of parentheses, that though one of the most shrewd men in England, he was, perhaps, the most unintelligible speaker that ever perplexed an audience. It has been long since said by the historian, that a collection of the Protector's speeches would make, with a few exceptions, the most nonsensical book in the world; but he ought to have added, that nothing could be more nervous, concise, and intelligible, than what he really intended should be understood.

It was also remarked of Cromwell, that though born of a good family, both by father and mother, and although he had the usual opportunities of education and breeding connected with such an advantage, the fanatic democratic ruler could never acquire, or else disdained to practise, the courtesies usually exercised among the higher classes in their intercourse with each other. His demeanour was so blunt as sometimes might be termed clownish, yet there was in his language and manner a force and energy corresponding to his character, which impressed awe, if it did not impose respect; and there were even times when that dark and subtle spirit expanded itself, so as almost to conciliate affection. The turn for humour, which displayed itself by fits, was broad, and of a low and sometimes practical character. Something there was in his disposition congenial to that of his countrymen; a contempt of folly, a hatred of affectation, and a dislike of ceremony, which, joined to the strong intrinsic qualities of sense and courage, made him in many respects not an unfit representative of the democracy of England.

His religion must always be a subject of much

doubt, and probably of doubt which he himself could hardly have cleared up. Unquestionably there was a time in his life when he was sincerely enthusiastic, and when his natural temper, slightly subject to hypochondria, was strongly agitated by the same fanaticism which influenced so many persons of the time. On the other hand, there were periods during his political career, when we certainly do him no injustice in charging him with hypocritical affectation. We shall probably judge him, and others of the same age, most truly, if we suppose that their religious professions were partly influential in their own breast, partly assumed in compliance with their own interest. And so ingenious is the human heart in deceiving itself as well as others, that it is probable neither Cromwell himself, nor those making similar pretensions to distinguished piety, could exactly have fixed the point at which their enthusiasm terminated and their hypocrisy commenced; or rather, it was a point not fixed in itself, but fluctuating with the state of health, of good or bad fortune, of high or low spirits, affecting the individual at the period.

Such was the celebrated person, who, turning

round on Wildrake, and scanning his countenance closely, seemed so little satisfied with what he beheld, that he instinctively hitched forward his belt, so as to bring the handle of his tuck-sword within his reach. But yet, folding his arms in his cloak, as if upon second thoughts laying aside suspicion, or thinking precaution beneath him, he asked the cavalier what he was, and whence he came?

"A poor gentleman, sir,—that is, my lord,"—answered Wildrake; "last from Woodstock."

"And what may your tidings be, sir *gentleman?*" said Cromwell, with an emphasis. "Truly I have seen those most willing to take upon them that title, bear themselves somewhat short of wise men, and good men, and true men, with all their gentility: Yet gentleman was a good title in old England, when men remembered what it was construed to mean."

"You say truly, sir," replied Wildrake, suppressing, with difficulty, some of his usual wild expletives; "formerly gentlemen were found in gentlemen's places, but now the world is so changed, that you shall find the broidered belt has changed place with the under spur-leather."

"Say'st thou me?" said the General; "I profess thou art a bold companion, that can bandy words so wantonly;—thou ring'st somewhat too loud to be good metal, methinks: And, once again, what are thy tidings with me?"

"This packet," said Wildrake, "commended to your hands by Colonel Markham Everard."

"Alas, I must have mistaken thee," answered Cromwell, mollified at the mention of a man's name whom he had great desire to make his own; "forgive us, good friend, for such, we doubt not, thou art. Sit thee down, and commune with thyself as thou mayst, until we have examined the contents of thy packet. Let him be looked to, and have what he lacks." So saying the General left the guard-house, where Wildrake took his seat in the corner, and awaited with patience the issue of his mission.

The soldiers now thought themselves obliged to treat him with more consideration, and offered him a pipe of Trinidadoe, and a black jack filled with October. But the look of Cromwell, and the dangerous situation in which he might be placed by the least chance of detection, induced Wildrake to

decline these hospitable offers, and stretching back in his chair, and affecting slumber, he escaped notice or conversation, until a sort of aid-de-camp, or military officer in attendance, came to summon him to Cromwell's presence.

By this person he was guided to a postern-gate, through which he entered the body of the Castle, and penetrating through many private passages and stair-cases, he at length was introduced into a small cabinet, or parlour, in which was much rich furniture, some bearing the royal cypher displayed, but all confused and disarranged, together with several paintings in massive frames, having their faces turned towards the wall, as if they had been taken down for the purpose of being removed.

In this scene of disorder, the victorious General of the Commonwealth was seated in a large easy-chair, covered with damask, and deeply embroidered, the splendour of which made a strong contrast with the plain, and even homely character of his apparel; although in look and action he seemed like one who felt that the seat which might have in former days held a prince,

was not too much distinguished for his own fortunes and ambition. Wildrake stood before him, nor did he ask him to sit down.

"Pearson," said Cromwell, addressing himself to the officer in attendance, "wait in the gallery, but be within call." Pearson bowed, and was retiring. "Who are in the gallery besides?"

"Worthy Mr Gordon, the chaplain, was holding forth but now to Colonel Overton, and four captains of your Excellency's regiment."

"We would have it so," said the General; "we would not there were any corner in our dwelling where the hungry soul might not meet with manna. Was the good man carried onward in his discourse?"

"Mightily borne through," said Pearson; "and he was touching the rightful claims which the army, and especially your Excellency, hath acquired, by becoming the instruments in the great work;—not instruments to be broken asunder and cast away when the day of their service is over, but to be preserved, and held precious and prized for their honourable and faithful labours, for which they have fought and marched,

and fasted, and prayed, and suffered cold and sorrow; while others, who would now gladly see them disbanded, and broken, and cashiered, eat of the fat, and drink of the strong."

"Ah, good man!" said Cromwell, "and did he touch upon this so feelingly? I could say something—but not now. Begone, Pearson, to the gallery. Let not our friends lay aside their swords, but watch as well as pray."

Pearson retired; and the General, holding the letter of Everard in his hand, looked again for a long while fixedly at Wildrake, as if considering in what strain he should address him.

When he did speak, it was, at first, in one of those ambiguous discourses which we have already described, and by which it was very difficult for any one to understand his meaning, if, indeed, he knew it himself. We shall be as concise in our statement, as our desire to give the very words of a man so extraordinary will permit.

"This letter," he said, "you have brought us from your master, or patron, Markham Everard; truly an excellent and honourable gentleman as ever bore a sword upon his thigh, and

one who hath ever distinguished himself in the great work of delivering these three poor and unhappy nations.—Answer me not: I know what thou would'st say.—And this letter he hath sent to me by thee, his clerk, or secretary, in whom he hath confidence, and in whom he prays me to have trust, that there may be a careful messenger between us. And lastly, he hath sent thee to me—Do not answer—I know what thou would'st say,—to me, who, albeit I am of that small consideration, that it would be too much honour for me even to bear a halbert in this great and victorious army of England, am nevertheless exalted to the rank of holding the guidance and the leading-staff thereof.—Nay, do not answer, my friend—I know what thou would'st say.—Now, when communing thus together, our discourse taketh, in respect to what I have said, a threefold argument, or division: First, as it concerneth thy master; secondly, as it concerneth us and our office; thirdly and lastly, as it toucheth thyself. Now, as concerning this good and worthy gentleman, Colonel Markham Everard, truly he hath played the man from the be-

ginning of these unhappy buffetings, not turning to the right or to the left, but holding ever in his eye the mark at which he aimed. Ay, truly, a faithful honourable gentleman, and one who may well call me friend; and truly I am pleased to think that he doth so. Nevertheless, in this vale of tears, we must be governed less by our private respects and partialities, than by those higher principles and points of duty, whereupon the good Colonel Markham Everard hath ever framed his purposes, as, truly, I have endeavoured to form mine, that we may all act as becometh good Englishmen and worthy patriots. Then, as for Woodstock, it is a great thing which the good Colonel asks, that it should be taken from the spoil of the godly, and left in keeping of the men of Moab, and especially of the malignant, Henry Lee, whose hand hath been ever against us when he might find room to raise it; I say, he hath asked a great thing, both in respect of himself and me. For we of this poor but godly army of England, are holden, by these of the Parliament, as men who should render in spoil for them, but be no sharer of it ourselves; even as the buck, which the hounds pull to earth,

furnisheth no part of their own food, but they are lashed off from the carcase with whips, like those which require punishment for their forwardness, not reward for their services. Yet I speak not this so much in respect of this grant of Woodstock, in regard that, perhaps, their Lordships of the Council, and also the Committee-men of this Parliament, may graciously think they have given me a portion in the matter, in relation that my kinsman Desborough hath an interest allowed him therein; which interest, as he hath well deserved it for his true and faithful service to these unhappy and devoted countries, so it would ill become me to diminish the same to his prejudice, unless it were upon great and public respects. Thus thou seest how it stands with me, my honest friend, and in what mind I stand touching this thy master's request to me; which yet I do not say that I can altogether, or unconditionally, grant or refuse, but only tell my simple thoughts with regard thereto. Thou understandest me, I doubt not?"

Now. Roger Wildrake, with all the attention he had been able to pay to the Lord General's speech, had got so much confused among the

various clauses of the harangue, that his brain was bewildered, like that of a country clown when he chances to get himself involved among a crowd of carriages, and cannot stir a step to get out of the way of one of them, without being in danger of being ridden over by the others.

The General saw his look of perplexity, and began a new oration, to the same purpose as before;—spoke of his love for his kind friend the Colonel,—his regard for his pious and godly kinsman, Master Desborough,—the great importance of the Palace and Park of Woodstock,—the determination of the Parliament that it should be confiscated, and the produce brought into the coffers of the state,—his own deep veneration for the authority of Parliament, and his no less deep sense of the injustice done to the army,—how it was his wish and will that all matters should be settled in an amicable and friendly manner, without self-seeking, debate, or strife, betwixt those who had been the hands acting, and such as had been the heads governing, in that great national cause,—how he was willing, truly willing, to contribute to this work, by laying down, not his commission only, but his life also, if it were

requested of him, or could be granted with safety to the poor soldiers, to whom, silly poor men, he was bound to be as a father, seeing that they had followed him with the duty and affection of children.

And here he arrived at another dead pause, leaving Wildrake as uncertain as before, whether it was or was not his purpose to grant Colonel Everard the powers he had asked for the protection of Woodstock against the Parliamentary Commissioners. Internally he began to entertain hopes that the justice of Heaven, or the effects of remorse, had confounded the regicide's understanding. But no—he could see nothing but sagacity in that steady stern eye, which, while the tongue poured forth its periphrastic language in such profusion, seemed to watch with severe accuracy the effect which his oratory produced on the listener.

"Egad," thought the cavalier to himself, becoming a little familiar with the situation in which he was placed, and rather impatient of a conversation which led to no visible conclusion or termination, "if Noll were the devil himself,

as he is the devil's darling, I will not be thus nose-led by him. I'll e'en brusque it a little, if he goes on at this rate, and try if I can bring him to a more intelligible mode of speaking."

Entertaining this bold purpose, but half afraid to execute it, Wildrake lay by for an opportunity of making the attempt, while Cromwell was apparently unable to express his own meaning. He was already beginning a third panegyric upon Colonel Everard, with sundry varied expressions of his own wish to oblige him, when Wildrake took the opportunity of a pause to strike in, on the General's making one of his oratorical pauses.

"So please you," he said, bluntly, "your worship has already spoken on two topics of your discourse, your own worthiness, and that of my master, Colonel Everard. But, to enable me to do mine errand, it would be necessary to bestow a few words on the third head."

"The third!" said Cromwell.

"Ay," said Wildrake, "which, in your honour's subdivision of your discourse, touched on my unworthy self. What am I to do—what portion am I to have in this matter?"

Oliver started at once from the tone of voice he had hitherto used, and which somewhat resembled the purring of a domestic cat, into the growl of the tiger when about to spring. "*Thy* portion, jail-bird!" he exclaimed, "the gallows—thou shalt hang as high as Haman, if thou betray counsel!—But," he added, softening his voice, "keep it like a true man, and my favour will be the making of thee. Come hither—thou art bold, I see, though somewhat saucy. Thou hast been a malignant—so writes my worthy friend Colonel Everard; but thou hast now given up that falling cause. I tell thee, friend, not all that the Parliament or the army could do would have pulled down the Stuarts out of their high places, saving that Heaven had a controversy with them. Well, it is a sweet and comely thing to buckle on one's armour in behalf of Heaven's cause; otherwise truly, for mine own part, these men might have remained upon the throne even unto this day. Neither do I blame any for aiding them, until these successive great judgments have overwhelmed them and their house. I am not a bloody man, having in me the feeling of human

frailty; but, friend, whosoever putteth his hand to the plough, in the great actings which are now on foot in these nations, had best beware that they do not look back; for, rely upon my simple word, that if you fail me, I will not spare on you one foot's length of the gallows of Haman. Let me therefore know, at a word, if the leaven of thy malignancy is altogether drubbed out of thee?"

"Your honourable lordship," said the cavalier, shrugging up his shoulders, "has done that for most of us, so far as cudgelling to some tune can perform it."

"Say'st thou?" said the General, with a grim smile on his lip, which seemed to intimate that he was not quite inaccessible to flattery; "yea, truly, thou dost not lie in that—we have been an instrument. Neither are we, as I have already hinted, so severely bent against those who have striven against us as malignants, as others may be. The parliament-men best know their own interest and their own pleasure; but, to my poor thinking, it is full time to close these jars, and to allow men of all kinds the means of doing service to their country; and we think it will be thy fault

if thou art not employed to good purpose for the state and thyself, on condition thou puttest away the old man entirely from thee, and givest thy earnest attention to what I have to tell thee."

"Your lordship need not doubt my attention," said the cavalier.

And the republican General, after another pause, as one who gave his confidence not without hesitation, proceeded to explain his views with a distinctness which he seldom used, yet not without his being a little biassed now and then, by his long habits of circumlocution, which indeed he seldom laid entirely aside, save in the field of battle.

"Thou seest," he said, "my friend, how things stand with me. The Parliament, I care not who knows it, love me not—still less do the Council of State, by whom they manage the executive government of the kingdom. I cannot tell why they nourish suspicion against me, unless it is because I will not deliver this poor innocent army, which has followed me in so many military actions, to be now pulled asunder, broken piece-meal and reduced, so that they who

have protected the state at the expense of their blood, will not have, perchance, the means of feeding themselves by their labour; which, methinks, were hard measure, since it is taking from Esau his birth-right even without giving him a poor mess of pottage."

"Esau is likely to help himself, I think," replied Wildrake.

"Truly, thou say'st wisely," replied the General; "it is ill starving an armed man, if there is food to be had for taking—nevertheless, far be it from me to encourage rebellion, or want of due subordination to these our rulers. I would only petition in a due and becoming, a sweet and harmonious manner, that they would listen to our conditions, and consider our necessities. But, sir, looking on me, and esteeming me so little as they do, you must think that it would be a provocation in me towards the Council of State, as well as the Parliament, if, simply to gratify your worthy master, I were to act contrary to their purposes, or deny currency to the commission under their authority, which is as yet the highest in the State—and long may it be so for me!—to carry on the sequestration which they intend.

And would it not also be said, that I was lending myself to the malignant interest, affording this den of the blood-thirsty and lascivious tyrants of yore, to be in this our day a place of refuge to that old and inveterate Amalekite Sir Henry Lee, to keep possession of the place in which he hath so long glorified himself? Truly, it would be a perilous matter."

"Am I then to report," said Wildrake, "an if it please you, that you cannot stead Colonel Everard in this matter?"

"Unconditionally, ay—but, taken conditionally, the answer may be otherwise,"—answered Cromwell. "I see thou art not able to fathom my purpose, and therefore I will partly unfold it to thee.—But take notice, that should thy tongue betray my council, save in so far as carrying it to thy master, by all the blood which has been shed in these wild times, thou shalt die a thousand deaths in one!"

"Do not fear me, sir," said Wildrake, whose natural boldness and carelessness of character was for the present time borne down and quelled, like that of falcons in the presence of the eagle.

"Hear me, then," said Cromwell, "and let

no syllable escape thee. Knowest thou not the young Lee whom they call Albert, a malignant like his father, and one who went up with the young man to that last ruffle which we had with him at Worcester?—May we be grateful for the victory!"

"I know there is such a young gentleman as Albert Lee," said Wildrake.

"And knowest thou not—I speak not by way of prying into the good Colonel's secrets, but only as it behoves me to know something of the matter that I may best judge how I am to serve him—Knowest thou not that thy master, Markham Everard, is a suitor after the sister of this same malignant, a daughter of the old Keeper, called Sir Henry Lee?"

"All this I have heard," said Wildrake, "nor can I deny that I believe in it."

"Well then, go to.—When the young man Charles Stuart fled from the field of Worcester, and was by sharp chase and pursuit compelled to separate himself from his followers, I know by sure intelligence that this Albert Lee was one of the last who remained with him, if not indeed the very last."

"It was devilish like him," said the cavalier, without sufficiently weighing his expressions, considering in what presence they were to be uttered —"And I'll uphold him with my rapier, to be a true chip of the old block."

"Ha, swearest thou?" said the General. "Is this thy reformation?"

"I never swear, so please you," replied Wildrake, recollecting himself, "except there is some mention of malignants and cavaliers in my hearing; and then the old habit returns, and I swear like one of Goring's troopers."

"Out upon thee," said the General; "what can it avail thee to practise a profanity so horrible to the ears of others, and which brings no emolument to him who uses it?"

"There are doubtless more profitable sins in the world than the vice of swearing," was the answer which rose to the lips of the cavalier; but that was exchanged for a profession of regret for having given offence. The truth was, the discourse began to take a turn which rendered it more interesting than ever to Wildrake, who therefore determined not to lose the opportunity for obtaining posses-

sion of the secret that seemed to be suspended on Cromwell's lips; and that could only be through means of keeping guard upon his own.

"What sort of a house is Woodstock?" said the General abruptly.

"An old mansion," said Wildrake in reply; "and so far as I could judge by a single night's lodgings, having abundance of back-stairs, also subterranean passages, and all the communications under ground, which are common in old raven-nests of the sort."

"And places for concealing priests unquestionably," said Cromwell. "It is seldom that such ancient houses lack secret stalls wherein to mew up these calves of Bethel."

"Your Honour's Excellency," said Wildrake, "may swear to that."

"I swear not at all,"—replied the General drily. —"But what think'st thou, good fellow?—I will ask thee a blunt question—Where will those two Worcester fugitives that thou wottest of be more likely to take shelter—and that they must be sheltered somewhere, I well know—than in this same old palace, with all the corners and conceal-

ments whereof young Albert hath been acquainted ever since his earliest infancy ?"

"Truly," said Wildrake, making an effort to answer the question with seeming indifference, while the possibility of such an event, and its consequences, flashed fearfully upon his mind,—"Truly, I should be of your honour's opinion, but that I think the company, who, by the commission of Parliament, have occupied Woodstock, are likely to fright them thence, as a cat scares doves from a pigeon-house. The neighbourhood, with reverence, of Generals Desborough and Harrison, will suit ill with fugitives from Worcester-field."

"I thought as much, and so, indeed, would I have it," answered the General. "Long may it be ere our names shall be aught but a terror to our enemies. But in this matter, if thou art an active plotter for thy master's interest, thou might'st, I should think, work out something favourable to his present object."

"My brain is too poor to reach the depth of your honourable purpose," said Wildrake.

"Listen then, and let it be to profit," answered Cromwell. "Assuredly the conquest at Wor-

cester was a great and crowning mercy; yet might we seem to be but small in our thankfulness for the same, did we not do what in us lies towards the ultimate improvement and final conclusion of the great work which has been thus prosperous in our hands, professing, in pure humility and singleness of heart, that we do not, in any way, desire our instrumentality to be remembered, nay, would rather pray and entreat, that our name and fortunes were forgotten, than that the great work were in itself incomplete. Nevertheless, truly, placed as we now are, it concerns us more nearly than others,—that is, if so poor creatures should at all speak of themselves as concerned, whether more or less, with these changes which have been wrought around, not, I say, by ourselves, or our own power, but by the destiny to which we were called, fulfilling the same with all meekness and humility—I say it concerns us nearly that all things should be done in conformity with the great work which hath been wrought, and is yet working, in these lands. Such is my plain and simple meaning. Nevertheless, it is much to be desired that this young man, this King of Scots,

as he called himself—this Charles Stuart—should not escape forth from the nation, where his arrival has wrought so much disturbance and bloodshed."

"I have no doubt," said the cavalier, looking down, "that your lordship's wisdom hath directed all things as they may best lead towards such a consummation; and I pray your pains may be paid as they deserve."

"I thank thee, friend," said Cromwell, with much humility; "doubtless we shall meet our reward, being in the hands of a good paymaster, who never passeth Saturday night. But understand me, friend—I desire no more than my own share in the good work. I would heartily do what poor kindness I can to your worthy master, and even to you in your degree—for such as I do not converse with ordinary men, that our presence may be forgotten like an every-day's occurrence. We speak to men like thee for their reward or their punishment; and I trust it will be the former which thou in thine office wilt merit at my hand."

"Your honour," said Wildrake, "speaks like one accustomed to command."

"True; men's minds are likened to those of my degree by fear and reverence," said the General;—"but enough of that, desiring, as I do, no other dependency on my special person than is alike to us all upon that which is above us. But I would desire to cast this golden ball into your master's cap. He hath served against this Charles Stuart and his father. But he is a kinsman near to the old knight Lee, and stands well affected towards his daughter. *Thou* also wilt keep a watch, my friend—that ruffling look of thine will procure thee the confidence of every malignant, and the prey cannot approach this cover, as though to shelter, like a coney in the rocks, but thou wilt be sensible of his presence."

"I make a shift to comprehend your Excellency," said the cavalier; "and I thank you heartily for the good opinion you have put upon me, and which, I pray, I may have some handsome opportunity of deserving, that I may show my gratitude by the event. But still, with reverence, your Excellency's scheme seems unlikely, while Woodstock remains in possession of the

sequestrators. Both the old knight and his son, and far more such a fugitive as your honour hinted at, will take special care not to approach it till they are removed."

"It is for that I have been dealing with thee thus long," said the General.—"I told thee that I was something unwilling, upon slight occasion, to dispossess the sequestrators by my own proper warrant, although having, perhaps, sufficient authority in the state both to do so, and to despise the murmurs of those who blame me. In brief, I would be loath to tamper with my privileges, and make experiments between their strength, and the powers of the commission granted by others, without need, or at least great prospect of advantage. So, if thy Colonel will undertake, for his love of the Republic, to find the means of preventing its worst and nearest danger, which must needs occur from the escape of this young man, and will do his endeavour to stay him, in case his flight should lead him to Woodstock, which I hold very likely, I will give thee an order to these sequestrators, to evacuate the palace instantly; and to the next troop of my regiment, which lies at Oxford, to turn them out by the

shoulders, if they make any scruples—Ay, even, for example's sake, if they drag Desborough out foremost, though he be wedded to my sister."

"So please you, sir," said Wildrake, "and with your most powerful warrant, I trust I might expel the commissioners, even without the aid of your most warlike and devout troopers."

"That is what I am least anxious about," replied the General; "I should like to see the best of them sit after I had nodded to them to begone—always excepting the worshipful House, in whose name our commissions run; but who, as some think, will be done with politics ere it be time to renew them. Therefore, what chiefly concerns me to know, is, whether thy master will embrace a traffic which hath such a fair promise of profit with it. I am well convinced that, with a scout like thee, who hast been in the cavaliers' quarters, and canst, I should guess, resume thy drinking, ruffianly health-quaffing manners whenever thou hast a mind, he must discover where this Stuart hath ensconced himself. Either the young Lee will visit the old one in person, or he will write to him, or hold

communication with him by letter. At all events, Markham Everard and thou must have an eye in every hair of your head." While he spoke, a flush passed over his brow, he rose from his chair, and paced the apartment in agitation. "Woe to you, if you suffer the young adventurer to escape me!—you had better be in the deepest dungeon in Europe, than breathe the air of England, should you but dream of playing me false. I have spoken freely to thee, fellow—more freely than is my wont—the time required it. But, to share my confidence is like keeping a watch over a powder-magazine, the least and most insignificant spark blows thee to ashes. Tell your master what I said—but not how I said it—Fie, that I should have been betrayed into the distemperature of passion!—Begone, sirrah. Pearson shall bring thee sealed orders—Yet, stay—thou hast something to ask."

"I would know," said Wildrake, to whom the visible anxiety of the General gave some confidence, "what is the figure of this young gallant, in case I should find him?"

"A tall, raw-boned, swarthy lad, they say

he has shot up into. Here is his picture by a good hand, some time since." He turned round one of the portraits which stood with its face against the wall; but it proved not to be that of Charles the Second, but of his unhappy father.

The first motion of Cromwell indicated a purpose of hastily replacing the picture, and it seemed as if an effort was necessary to repress his disinclination to look upon it. But he did repress it, and, placing the picture against the wall, withdrew slowly and sternly, as if, in defiance of his own feeling, he was determined to gain a place from which to see it to advantage. It was well for Wildrake that his dangerous companion had not turned an eye on him, for *his* blood also kindled when he saw the portrait of his master in the hands of the chief author of his death. Being a fierce and desperate man, he commanded his passion with great difficulty; and if, on its first violence, he had been provided with a suitable weapon, it is possible Cromwell would never have ascended higher in his bold ascent towards supreme power.

But this natural and sudden flash of indigna-

tion, which rushed through the veins of an ordinary man like Wildrake, was presently subdued, when confronted with the strong yet stifled emotion displayed by so powerful a character as Cromwell. As the cavalier looked on his dark and bold countenance, agitated by inward and indescribable feelings, he found his own violence of spirit die away and lose itself in fear and wonder. So true it is, that as greater lights swallow up and extinguish the display of those which are less, so men of great, capacious, and over-ruling minds, bear aside and subdue, in their climax of passion, the more feeble wills and passions of others; as, when a river joins a brook, the fiercer torrent shoulders aside the smaller stream.

Wildrake stood a silent, inactive, and almost a terrified spectator, while Cromwell, assuming a firm sternness of eye and manner, as one who compels himself to look on what some strong internal feeling renders painful and disgustful to him, proceeded, in brief and interrupted expressions, but yet with a firm voice, to comment on the portrait of the late King. His words seemed

less addressed to Wildrake, than to be the spontaneous unburthening of his own bosom, swelling under recollection of the past and anticipation of the future.

"That Flemish painter," he said—"that Antonio Vandyke—what a power he has! Steel may mutilate, warriors may waste and destroy—still the King stands uninjured by time; and our grandchildren, while they read his history, may look on his image, and compare the melancholy features with the woful tale.—It was a stern necessity—it was an awful deed! The calm pride of that eye might have ruled worlds of crouching Frenchmen, or supple Italians, or formal Spaniards, but its glances only roused the native courage of the stern Englishman.—Lay not on poor sinful man, whose breath is in his nostrils, the blame that he falls, when Heaven never gave him strength of nerves to stand! The weak rider is thrown by his unruly horse, and trampled to death—the strongest man, the best cavalier, springs to the empty saddle, and uses bit and spur till the fiery horse knows its master. Who blames him, who, mounted aloft, rides triumph-

antly amongst the people, for having succeeded, where the unskilful and feeble fell and died? Verily he hath his reward: Then, what is that piece of painted canvass to me more than others? No; let him show to others the reproaches of that cold, calm face, that proud yet complaining eye: Those who have acted on higher respects have no cause to start at painted shadows. Not wealth nor power brought me from my obscurity. The oppressed consciences, the injured liberties of England, were the banner that I followed."

He raised his voice so high, as if pleading in his own defence before some tribunal, that Pearson, the officer in attendance, looked into the apartment; and observing his master, with his eyes kindling, his arm extended, his foot advanced, and his voice raised, like a general in the act of commanding the advance of his army, he instantly withdrew.

"It was other than selfish regards that drew me forth to action," continued Cromwell, "and I dare the world—ay, living or dead I challenge—to assert that I armed for a private cause, or

as a means of enlarging my fortunes. Neither was there a trooper in the regiment who came there with less of evil will to yonder unhappy——"

At this moment the apartment opened, and a gentlewoman entered, who, from her resemblance to the General, although her features were soft and feminine, might be immediately recognised as his daughter. She walked up to Cromwell, gently but firmly passed her arm through his, and said to him in a persuasive tone, "Father, this is not well—you have promised me this should not happen."

The General hung down his head, like one who was either ashamed of the passion to which he had given way, or of the influence which was exercised over him. He yielded, however, to the affectionate impulse, and left the apartment, without again turning his head towards the portrait which had so much affected him.

CHAPTER IX.

Doctor.—Go to, go to—You have known what you should not.
Macbeth.

Wildrake was left in the cabinet, astonished and alone. It was often noised about, that Cromwell, the deep and sagacious statesman, the calm and intrepid commander, he who had overcome such difficulties, and ascended to such heights, that he seemed already to bestride the land which he had conquered, had, like many other men of great genius, a constitutional taint of melancholy, which sometimes displayed itself both in words and actions, and had been first observed, in that sudden and striking change, when, abandoning entirely the dissolute freaks of his youth, he embraced a very strict course of

religious observances, which, upon some occasions, he seemed to consider as bringing him into more near and close contact with the spiritual world. This extraordinary man is said sometimes, during that period of his life, to have given way to spiritual delusions, or, as he himself conceived them, prophetic inspirations of approaching grandeur, and of strange, deep, and mysterious agencies, in which he was in future to be engaged, in the same manner as his younger years had been marked by fits of exuberant and excessive frolic and debaucheries. Something of this kind seemed to explain the ebullitions of passion which he had now manifested.

With wonder at what he had witnessed, Wildrake felt some anxiety on his own account. Though not the most reflecting of mortals, he had sense enough to know, that it is dangerous to be a witness of the infirmities of men high in power; and he was left so long by himself, as induced him to entertain some secret doubts, whether the General might not be tempted to take means of confining or removing a witness, who had seen him lowered, as it seemed, by the suggestions of his own

conscience, beneath that lofty flight, which, in general, he affected to sustain above the rest of the sublunary world.

In this, however, he wronged Cromwell, who was free either from an extreme degree of jealous suspicion, or from anything which approached towards blood-thirstiness. Pearson appeared, after lapse of about an hour, and, intimating to Wildrake that he was to follow, conducted him into a distant apartment, in which he found the General seated on a low couch. His daughter was in the apartment, but remained at some distance, seemed busied with some female work, and scarce turned her head as Pearson and Wildrake entered.

At a sign from the Lord General, Wildrake approached him as before. "Friend," he said, "your old friends the cavaliers look on me as their enemy, and conduct themselves towards me as if they desired to make me such. I profess they are labouring to their own prejudice; for I regard, and have ever regarded them, as honest and honourable fools, who were silly enough to run their necks into nooses, and their heads

against stone-walls, that a man called Stuart, and no other, should be king over them. Fools! are there no words made of letters that would sound as well as Charles Stuart, with that magic title beside them? Why, the word King is like a lighted lamp, that throws the same bright gilding upon any combination of the alphabet, and yet you must shed your blood for a name! But thou, for thy part, shalt have no wrong from me. Here is an order, well warranted, to clear the Lodge at Woodstock, and abandon it to thy master's keeping, or those whom he shall appoint. He will have his uncle and pretty cousin with him, doubtless. Fare thee well—think on what I told thee. They say beauty is a loadstone to yonder long lad, thou dost wot of; but I reckon he has other stars at present to direct his course than bright eyes and fair hair. Be it as it may, thou knowest my purpose—peer out, peer out; keep a constant and careful look-out on every ragged patch that wanders by hedge-row or lane—these are days when a beggar's cloak may cover a king's ransom. There are some broad Portugal pieces for thee—something

strange to thy pouch, I ween.—Once more, think on what thou hast heard, and," he added, in a lower and more impressive tone of voice, "forget what thou hast seen. My service to thy master:—and, yet once again, *remember*—and *forget*."—Wildrake made his obeisance, and, returning to his inn, left Windsor with all possible speed.

It was afternoon in the same day when the cavalier rejoined his round-head friend, who was anxiously expecting him at the inn in Woodstock appointed for their rendezvous.

"Where hast thou been?—what hast thou seen?—what strange uncertainty is in thy looks?—and why dost thou not answer me?"

"Because," said Wildrake, laying aside his riding cloak and rapier, "you ask so many questions at once. A man has but one tongue to answer with, and mine is well nigh glued to the roof of my mouth."

"Will drink unloosen it?" said the Colonel; "though I dare say thou hast tried that spell at every ale-house on the road. Call for what thou would'st have, man, only be quick."

"Colonel Everard," answered Wildrake, "I have not tasted so much as a cup of cold water this day."

"Then thou art out of humour for that reason," said the Colonel; "salve thy sore with brandy, if thou wilt, but leave being so fantastic and unlike to thyself, as thou showest in this silent mood."

"Colonel Everard," replied the cavalier, very gravely, "I am an altered man."

"I think thou dost alter every day in the year, and every hour of the day. Come, good now, tell me hast thou seen the General, and got his warrant for clearing out the sequestrators from Woodstock?"

"I have seen the devil," said Wildrake, "and hast, as thou say'st, got a warrant from him."

"Give it me hastily," said Everard, catching at the packet.

"Forgive me, Mark," said Wildrake; "if thou knewest the purpose with which this deed is granted—if thou knewest—what is not my purpose to tell thee—what manner of hopes are founded on thy accepting it, I have that opinion

of thee, Mark Everard, that thou would'st as soon take a red-hot horse-shoe from the anvil with thy bare hand, as receive into it this slip of paper."

"Come, come," said Everard, "this comes of some of your exalted ideas of loyalty, which, excellent within certain bounds, drive us mad when encouraged up to some heights. Do not think, since I must needs speak plainly with thee, that I see without sorrow the downfall of our ancient monarchy, and the substitution of another form of government in its stead; but ought my regret for the past to prevent my acquiescing and aiding in such measures as are likely to settle the future? The royal cause is ruined, hadst thou and every cavalier in England sworn the contrary; ruined, not to rise again,—for many a day at least. The Parliament, so often draughted and drained of those who were courageous enough to maintain their own freedom of opinion, is now reduced to a handful of statesmen, who have lost the respect of the people, from the length of time during which they have held the supreme management of affairs. They cannot stand long unless they were to

reduce the army; and the army, late servants, are now masters, and will refuse to be reduced. They know their strength, and that they may be an army subsisting on pay and free quarters throughout England as long as they will. I tell thee, Wildrake, unless we look to the only man who can rule and manage them, we may expect military law throughout the land; and I, for mine own part, look for any preservation of our privileges that may be vouchsafed to us, only through the wisdom and forbearance of Cromwell. Now you have my secret. You are aware that I am not doing the best I would, but the best I can. I wish—not so ardently as thou, perhaps—yet I *do* wish that the King could have been restored on good terms of composition, safe for us and for himself. And now, good Wildrake, rebel as thou thinkest me, make me no worse a rebel than an unwilling one. God knows, I never laid aside love and reverence to the King, even in drawing my sword against his ill advisers."

"Ah, plague on you," said Wildrake, "that is the very cant of it—that's what you all say.

All of you fought against the King in pure love and loyalty, and not otherwise. However, I see your drift, and I own that I like it better than I expected. The army is your bear now, and Old Noll is your bearward; and you are like a country constable, who makes interest with the bearward that he may prevent him from letting bruin loose. Well, there may come a day when the sun will shine on our side of the fence, and thereon shall you, and all the good fair-weather folks who love the stronger party, come and make common cause with us."

Without much attending to what his friend said, Colonel Everard carefully studied the warrant of Cromwell. "It is bolder and more peremptory than I expected," he said. "The General must feel himself strong, when he opposes his own authority so directly to that of the Council of State and the Parliament."

"You will not hesitate to act upon it?" said Wildrake.

"That I certainly will not," answered Everard; "but I must wait till I have the assistance of the Mayor, who, I think, will gladly see these

fellows ejected from the Lodge. I must not go altogether upon military authority, if possible." Then stepping to the door of the apartment, he dispatched a servant of the house in quest of the Chief Magistrate, desiring he should be made acquainted that Colonel Everard desired to see him with as little loss of time as possible.

"You are sure he will come, like a dog at a whistle," said Wildrake. "The word captain, or colonel, makes the fat citizen trot in these days, when one sword is worth fifty corporation charters. But there are dragoons yonder, as well as the grim-faced knave whom I frightened the other evening when I showed my face in at the window. Think'st thou the knaves will show no rough play?"

"The General's warrant will weigh more with them than a dozen acts of Parliament," said Everard.—"But it is time thou eatest, if thou hast in truth ridden from Windsor hither without baiting."

"I care not about it," said Wildrake: "I tell thee, your General gave me a breakfast, which, I think, will serve me one while, if I ever

am able to digest it. By the mass, it lay so heavy on my conscience, that I carried it to church to see if I could digest it there with my other sins. But not a whit."

"To church!—to the door of the church, thou meanest," said Everard. "I know thy way—thou art ever wont to pull thy hat off reverently at the threshold, but for crossing it, that day seldom comes."

"Well," replied Wildrake, "and if I do pull off my castor and kneel, is it not seemly to show the same respects in a church which we offer in a palace? It is a dainty matter, is it not, to see your Anabaptists, and Brownists, and the rest of you, gather to a sermon with as little ceremony as hogs to a trough? But here comes food, and now for a grace, if I can remember one."

Everard was too much interested about the fate of his uncle and his fair cousin, and the prospect of restoring them to their quiet home, under the protection of that formidable truncheon which was already regarded as the leading-staff of England, to remark, that certainly a great alteration

had taken place in the manners and outward behaviour, at least, of his companion. His demeanour frequently evinced a sort of struggle betwixt old habits of indulgence, and some newly formed resolutions of abstinence; and it was almost ludicrous to see how often the hand of the neophyte directed itself naturally to a large black leathern jack, which contained two double flagons of strong ale, and how often, diverted from its purpose by the better reflections of the reformed toper, it seized, instead, upon a large ewer of salubrious and pure water.

It was easy to see that the task of sobriety was not yet become easy, and that, if it had the recommendation of the intellectual portion of the party who had resolved upon it, the outward man yielded a reluctant and restive compliance. But honest Wildrake had been dreadfully frightened at the course proposed to him by Cromwell, and, with a feeling not peculiar to the Catholic religion, had formed a solemn resolution within his own mind, that if he came off safe and with honour from this dangerous interview, he would show his sense of Heaven's favour, by

renouncing some of the sins which most easily beset him, and especially that of intemperance, to which, like many of his wild compeers, he was too much addicted.

This resolution, or vow, was partly prudential as well as religious, for it occurred to him as very possible, that some matters of a difficult and delicate nature might be thrown into his hands at the present emergency, during the conduct of which it would be fitting for him to act by some better oracle than that of the Bottle, celebrated by Rabelais. In full compliance with this prudent determination, he touched neither the ale nor the brandy which was placed before him, and declined peremptorily the sack with which his friend would have garnished the board. Nevertheless, just as the boy removed the trenchers and napkins, together with the large black jack which we have already mentioned, and was one or two steps on his way to the door, the sinewy arm of the cavalier, which seemed to elongate itself on purpose, (as it extended far beyond the folds of the thread-bare jacket,) arrested the progress of the retiring Ganymede, and seizing on

the black jack, conveyed it to the lips, which were gently breathing forth the aspiration, "D—n —I mean, Heaven forgive me—we are poor creatures of clay—one modest sip must be permitted to our frailty."

So murmuring, he glued the huge flagon to his lips; and as the head was slowly and gradually inclined backwards, in proportion as the right hand elevated the bottom of the pitcher, Everard had great doubts whether the drinker and the cup were likely to part until the whole contents of the latter had been transferred to the person of the former. Roger Wildrake stinted, however, when by a moderate computation he had swallowed at one draught about a quart and a half.

He then replaced it on the salver, fetched a long breath to refresh his lungs, bade the boy get him gone with the rest of the liquors, in a tone which inferred some dread of his constancy, and then, turning to his friend Everard, he expatiated in praise of moderation, observing, that the mouthful which he had just taken had been of more service to him than if he had remained

quaffing healths at table for four hours together.

His friend made no reply, but could not help being privately of opinion, that Wildrake's temperance had done as much execution on the tankard in his single draught, as some more moderate topers might have effected if they had sat sipping for an evening. But the subject was changed by the entrance of the landlord, who came to announce to his honour Colonel Everard, that the worshipful Mayor of Woodstock, with the Rev. Master Holdenough, were come to wait upon him.

CHAPTER X.

——"Here have we one head
Upon two bodies—your two-headed bullock
Is but an ass to such a prodigy.
These two have but one meaning, thought, and counsel;
And, when the single noddle has spoke out,
The four legs scrape assent to it."

Old Play.

In the goodly form of the honest Mayor, there was a bustling mixture of importance and embarrassment, like the deportment of a man who was conscious that he had an important part to act, if he could but exactly discover what that part was. But both were mingled with much pleasure at seeing Everard, and he frequently repeated his welcomes and all-hails before he could be brought to attend to what that gentleman said in reply.

"Good worthy Colonel, you are indeed a desirable sight to Woodstock at all times, being, as I may say, almost our townsman, as you have

dwelt so much and so long at the palace. Truly, the matter begins almost to pass my wit, though I have transacted the affairs of this borough for many a long day; and you are come to my assistance like, like——"

"*Tanquam Deus ex machina*, as the Ethnic poet hath it," said Master Holdenough, "although I do not often quote from such books.—Indeed, Master Markham Everard—or worthy Colonel, as I ought rather to say—you are simply the most welcome man who has come to Woodstock since the days of old King Harry."

"I had some business with you, my good friend," said the Colonel, addressing the Mayor; "I shall be glad if it should so happen at the same time, that I may find occasion to pleasure you or your worthy pastor."

"No question you can do so, good sir," interposed Master Holdenough; "you have the heart, sir, and you have the hand; and we are much in want of good counsel, and that from a man of action. I am aware, worthy Colonel, that you and your worthy father have ever borne yourselves in these turmoils like men of a truly Christian and moderate spirit, striving to pour oil into the

wounds of the land, which some would rub with vitriol and pepper; and we know you are faithful children of the church we have reformed from its papistical and prelatical tenets."

"My good and reverend friend," said Everard, "I respect the piety and learning of many of your teachers; but I am also for liberty of conscience to all men. I neither side with sectaries, nor do I desire to see them the object of suppression by violence."

"Sir, sir," said the Presbyterian hastily, "all this hath a fair sound; but I would you should think what a fine country and church we are like to have of it, amidst the errors, blasphemies, and schisms, which are daily introduced into the church and kingdom of England, so that worthy Master Edwards, in his Gangrena, declareth, that our native country is about to become the very sink and cess-pool of all schisms, heresies, blasphemies, and confusions, as the army of Hannibal was said to be the refuse of all nations—*Colluvies omnium gentium.*—Believe me, worthy Colonel, that they of the Honourable House view all this over lightly, and with the winking connivance of

old Eli. These instructors, the schismatics, shoulder the orthodox ministers out of their pulpits, thrust themselves into families, and break up the peace thereof, stealing away men's hearts from the established faith."

"My good Master Holdenough," replied the Colonel, interrupting the zealous preacher, "there is ground of sorrow for all these unhappy discords; and I hold with you, that the fiery spirits of the present time, have raised men's minds at once above sober-minded and sincere religion, and above decorum and common sense. But there is no help save patience. Enthusiasm is a stream that may foam off in its own time, whereas it is sure to bear down every barrier which is directly opposed to it.—But what are these schismatical proceedings to our present purpose?"

"Why, partly this, sir," said Holdenough, "although perhaps you may make less of it than I should have thought before we met.—I was myself—I, Nehemiah Holdenough, (he added, consequentially,) was forcibly expelled from my own pulpit, even as a man should have been thrust out of his own house by an alien, and

an intruder, a wolf, who was not at the trouble even to put on sheep's clothing, but came in his native wolfish attire of buff and bandalier, and held forth in my stead to the people, who are to me as a flock to the lawful shepherd. It is too true, sir—Master Mayor saw it, and strove to take such order to prevent it as man might, though," turning to the Mayor, "I think still you might have striven a little more."

"Good now, good Master Holdenough, do not let us go back on that question," said the Mayor. "Guy of Warwick, or Bevis of Hampton, might do something with this generation; but truly, they are too many and too strong for the Mayor of Woodstock."

"I think Master Mayor speaks very good sense," said the Colonel; "if the Independents are not allowed to preach, I fear me they will not fight;—and then if you were to have another rising of cavaliers?"

"There are worse folks may rise than cavaliers," said Holdenough.

"How, sir?" replied Colonel Everard. "Let

me remind you, Master Holdenough, that is no safe language in the present state of the nation."

"I say," said the Presbyterian, "there are worse folks may rise than cavaliers; and I will prove what I say. The devil is worse than the worst cavalier that ever drunk a health, or swore an oath—and the devil has arisen at Woodstock Lodge!"

"Ay, truly hath he," said the Mayor, "bodily and visibly, in figure and form—An awful time we live in!"

"Gentlemen, I really know not how I am to understand you," said Everard.

"Why, it was even about the devil we came to speak with you," said the Mayor; "but the worthy minister is always so hot upon the sectaries——"

"Which are the devil's brats, and nearly akin to him," said Master Holdenough. "But true it is, that the growth of these sects has brought up the Evil One even upon the face of the earth, to look after his own interest, where he finds it most thriving."

"Master Holdenough," said the Colonel, "if

you speak figuratively, I have already told you that I have neither the means nor the skill sufficient to temper these religious heats. But if you design to say that there has been an actual apparition of the devil, I presume to think that you, with your doctrine and your learning, would be a fitter match for him than a soldier like me."

"True, sir; and I have that confidence in the commission which I hold, that I would take the field against the foul fiend without a moment's delay," said Holdenough; "but the place in which he hath of late appeared, being Woodstock, is filled with those dangerous and impious persons, of whom I have been but now complaining; and though I dare venture in disputation with their Great Master himself, yet without your protection, most worthy Colonel, I see not that I may with prudence trust myself with the tossing and goring ox Desborough, or the bloody and devouring bear Harrison, or the cold and poisonous snake Bletson—all of whom are now at the Lodge, doing license and taking spoil as they think meet; and, as all men say, the devil has come to make a fourth with them."

"In good truth, worthy and noble sir," said the Mayor, "it is even as Master Holdenough says—our privileges are declared void, our cattle seized in the very pastures. They talk of cutting down and disparking the fair Chase, which has been so long the pleasure of so many kings, and making Woodstock of as little note as any paltry village. I assure you we heard of your arrival with joy, and wondered at your keeping yourself so close in your lodgings. We know no one save your father or you, that are like to stand the poor burgesses' friend in this extremity, since almost all the gentry around are malignants, and under sequestration. We trust, therefore, you will make strong intercession in our behalf."

"Certainly, Master Mayor," said the Colonel, who saw himself with pleasure anticipated; "it was my very purpose to have interfered in this matter; and I did but keep myself alone until I should be furnished with some authority from the Lord General."

"Powers from the Lord General!" said the Mayor, thrusting the clergyman with his elbow —"Dost thou hear that?—What cock will fight

that cock? We shall carry it now over their necks, and Woodstock shall be brave Woodstock still!"

"Keep thine elbow from my side, friend," said Holdenough, annoyed by the action which the Mayor had suited to his words; "and may the Lord send that Cromwell prove not as sharp to the people of England as thy bones against my person! Yet I approve that we should use his authority to stop the course of these men's proceedings."

"Let us set out then," said Colonel Everard; "and I trust we shall find the gentlemen reasonable and obedient."

The functionaries, laic and clerical, assented with much joy; and the Colonel required and received Wildrake's assistance in putting on his cloak and rapier, as if he had been the dependant whose part he acted. The cavalier contrived, however, while doing him these menial offices, to give his friend a shrewd pinch, in order to maintain the footing of secret equality betwixt them.

The Colonel was saluted, as they passed through the streets, by many of the anxious inhabitants,

who seemed to consider his intervention as affording the only chance of saving their fine Park, and the rights of the corporation, as well as of individuals, from ruin and confiscation.

As they entered the Park, the Colonel asked his companions, "What is this you say of apparitions being seen amongst them?"

"Why, Colonel," said the clergyman, "you know yourself that Woodstock was always haunted?"

"I have lived therein many a day," said the Colonel; "and I know that I never saw the least sign of it, although idle people spoke of the house as they do of all old mansions, and gave the apartments ghosts and spectres to fill up the places of the deceased great, who had ever dwelt there."

"Nay, but, good Colonel," said the clergyman, "I trust you have not reached the prevailing sin of the times, and become indifferent to the testimony in favour of apparitions, which appears so conclusive to all but atheists, and advocates for witches?"

"I would not absolutely disbelieve what is so

generally affirmed," said the Colonel; "but my temper leads me to doubt most of the stories which I have heard of this sort, and my own experience never went to confirm any of them."

"Ay, but trust me," said Holdenough, "there was always a demon of one or the other species about this Woodstock. Not a man or woman in the town but has heard stories of apparitions in the forest, or about the old castle. Sometimes it is a pack of hounds that sweep along, and the whoops and hollos of the huntsman, and the winding of horns and the galloping of horse, which is heard as if first more distant, and then close around you—and then anon it is a solitary huntsman, who asks if you can tell him which way the stag has gone. He is always dressed in green; but the fashion of his clothes is some five hundred years old. This is what we call Demon Meridianum—the noonday spectre."

"My worthy and reverend sir," said the Colonel, "I have lived at Woodstock many seasons, and have traversed the Chase at all hours. Trust me, what you hear from the villagers is the growth of their idle folly and superstition."

"Colonel," replied Holdenough, "a negative

proves nothing. What signifies, craving your pardon, that you have not seen anything, be it earthly, or be it of the other world, to detract from the evidence of a score of people who have?—And, besides, there is the Demon Nocturnum—the being that walketh by night—He has been among these Independents and schismatics last night.—Ay, Colonel, you may stare; but it is even so—they may try whether he will mend their gifts, as they profanely call them, of exposition and prayer. No, sir, I trow, to master the foul fiend there goeth some competent knowledge of theology, and an acquaintance with the humane letters, ay, and a regular clerical education, and clerical calling."

"I do not in the least doubt," said the Colonel, "the efficacy of your qualifications to lay the devil; but still I think some odd mistake has occasioned this confusion amongst them, if there has any such in reality existed. Desborough is a blockhead, to be sure; and Harrison is fanatic enough to believe anything. But there is Bletson, on the other hand, who believes nothing.—What do you know of this matter, good Master Mayor?"

"In sooth, and it was Master Bletson who gave the first alarm," replied the magistrate, "or, at least, the first distinct one. You see, sir, I was in bed with my wife, and no one else; and I was as fast asleep as a man can desire to be at two hours after midnight, when, behold you, they came knocking at my bed-room door, to tell me there was an alarm in Woodstock, and that the bell of the Lodge was ringing at that dead hour of the night, as hard as ever it rung when it called the court to dinner."

"Well, but the cause of this alarm?" said the Colonel.

"You shall hear, worthy Colonel, you shall hear," answered the Mayor, waving his hand with dignity; for he was one of those persons who will not be hurried out of their own pace. "So Mrs Mayor would have persuaded me, in her love and affection, poor wretch, that to rise at such an hour out of my warm bed, was like to bring on my old complaint the lumbago, and that I should send the people to Alderman Dutton.—Alderman Devil, Mrs Mayor, said I;—I beg your reverence's pardon for using such a

phrase—Do you think I am going to lie a-bed when the town is on fire, and the cavaliers up, and the devil to pay?—I beg pardon again, parson.—But, here we are before the gate of the Palace; will it not please you to enter?"

"I would first hear the end of your story," said the Colonel; "that is, Master Mayor, if it happens to have an end."

"Everything hath an end," said the Mayor, "and that which we call a pudding hath two.—Your worship will forgive me for being facetious. Where was I?—O, I jumped out of bed, and put on my red plush breeches, with the blue nether stocks, for I always make a point of being dressed suitably to my dignity, night and day, summer or winter, Colonel Everard; and I took the constable along with me, in case the alarm should be raised by night-walkers or thieves, and called up worthy Master Holdenough out of his bed, in case it should turn out to be the devil. And so I thought I was provided for the worst—and so away we came; and, by and by, the soldiers, who came to the town with Master Tomkins, who had been called to arms, came marching

down to Woodstock as fast as their feet would carry them ; so I gave our people the sign to let them pass us, and outmarch us, as it were, and this for a twofold reason."

"I will be satisfied," interrupted the Colonel, "with one good reason. You desired the red-coats should have the *first* of the fray."

"True, sir, very true;—and also that they should have the *last* of it, in respect that fighting is their especial business. However, we came on at a slow pace, as men who are determined to do their duty without fear or favour, when suddenly we saw something white haste away up the avenue towards the town, when six of our constables and assistants fled at once, as conceiving it to be an apparition called the White Woman of Woodstock."

"Look you there, Colonel," said Master Holdenough, "I told you there were demons of more kinds than one, which haunt the ancient scenes of royal debauchery and cruelty."

"I hope you stood your own ground, Master Mayor?" said the Colonel.

"I—yes—most assuredly—that is, I did not,

strictly speaking, keep my ground; but the town-clerk and I retreated—retreated, Colonel, and without confusion or dishonour, and took post behind worthy Master Holdenough, who, with the spirit of a lion, threw himself in the way of the supposed spectre, and attacked it with such a siserary of Latin as might have scared the devil himself, and thereby plainly discovered that it was no devil at all, nor white woman, neither woman of any colour, but worshipful Master Bletson, a member of the House of Commons, and one of the commissioners sent hither upon this unhappy sequestration of the Wood, Chase, and Lodge of Woodstock."

"And this was all you saw of the demon?" said the Colonel.

"Truly, yes," answered the Mayor; "and I had no wish to see more. However, we conveyed Master Bletson, as in duty bound, back to the Lodge, and he was ever maundering by the way how that he met a party of scarlet devils incarnate marching down to the Lodge; but, to my poor thinking, it must have been the independent dragoons who had just passed us."

"And more incarnate devils I would never wish to see," said Wildrake, who could remain silent no longer. His voice, so suddenly heard, showed how much the Mayor's nerves were still alarmed, for he started and jumped aside with an alacrity of which no one would at first sight suppose a man of his portly dignity to have been capable. Everard imposed silence on his intrusive attendant; and, desirous to hear the conclusion of this strange story, requested the Mayor to tell him how the matter ended, and whether they stopped the supposed spectre.

"Truly, worthy sir," said the Mayor, "Master Holdenough was quite venturous upon confronting, as it were, the devil, and compelling him to appear under the real form of Master Joshua Bletson, member of Parliament for the borough of Littlefaith."

"In sooth, Master Mayor," said the divine, "I were strangely ignorant of my own commission and its immunities, if I were to value opposing myself to Satan, or any independent in his likeness, all of whom, in the name of Him I serve, I do defy, spit at, and trample under my feet;

and because Master Mayor is something tedious, I will briefly inform your honour that we saw little of the Enemy that night, save what Master Bletson said in the first feeling of his terrors, and save what we might collect from the disordered appearance of the honourable Colonel Desborough and Major-General Harrison."

"And what plight were they in, I pray you?" demanded the Colonel.

"Why, worthy sir, every one might see with half an eye that they had been engaged in a fight wherein they had not been honoured with victory, seeing that General Harrison was stalking up and down the parlour, with his drawn sword in his hand, talking to himself, his doublet unbuttoned, his points untrussed, his garters loose, and like to throw him down as he now and then trod on them, and gaping and grinning like a mad player. And yonder sate Desborough with a dry pottle of sack before him, which he had just emptied, and which, though the element in which he trusted, had not restored him sense enough to speak, or courage enough to look over his shoulder. He had a Bible in his hand forsooth, as if it

would make battle against the Evil One; but I peered over his shoulder, and, alas! the good gentleman held the bottom of the page uppermost. It was as if one of your musketeers, noble and valued sir, were to present the butt of his piece at the enemy instead of the muzzle—ha, ha, ha! it was a sight to judge of schismatics by; both in point of head, and in point of heart, in point of skill and in point of courage.—Oh! Colonel, then was the time to see the true character of an authorized pastor of souls over those unhappy men, who leap into the fold without due and legal authority, and will, forsooth, preach, teach, and exhort, and blasphemously term the doctrine of the church saltless porridge and dry chips."

"I have no doubt you were ready to meet the danger, reverend sir; but I would fain know of what nature it was, and from whence it was to be apprehended?"

"Was it for me to make such inquiry?" said the clergyman, triumphantly. "Is it for a brave soldier to number his enemies, or inquire from what quarter they are to come?—No, sir, I was

there with match lighted, bullet in my mouth, and my harquebuss shouldered, to encounter as many devils as hell could pour in, were they countless as motes in the sunbeam, and came from all points of the compass. The papists talk of the temptation of St Anthony—pshaw! let them double all the myriads which the brain of a crazy Dutch painter hath invented, and you will find a poor Presbyterian divine—I will answer for one at least,—who, not in his own strength, but his Master's, will receive the assault in such sort, that far from returning against him as against yonder poor hound, day after day, and night after night, he will at once pack them off as with a vengeance to the uttermost parts of Assyria."

"Still," said the Colonel, "I pray to know whether you saw anything upon which to exercise your pious learning?"

"Saw?" answered the divine; "no, truly, I saw nothing, nor did I look for anything. Thieves will not attack well-armed travellers, nor will devils or evil spirits come against one who bears in his bosom the word of truth, in the very language in which it was first dictated. No, sir, they shun

a divine who can understand the holy text, as a crow is said to keep wide of a gun loaded with hail-shot."

They had walked a little way back upon their road, to give time for this conversation; and the Colonel, perceiving it was about to lead to no satisfactory explanation of the real cause of alarm on the preceding night, turned round, and observing it was time they should go to the Lodge, began to move in that direction with his three companions.

It was now becoming dark, and the towers of Woodstock arose high above the umbrageous shroud which the forest spread around the ancient and venerable mansion. From one of the highest turrets, which could still be distinguished as it rose against the clear blue sky, there gleamed a light like that of a candle within the building. The Mayor stopt short, and catching fast hold of the divine, and then of Colonel Everard, exclaimed, in a trembling and hasty, but suppressed tone, "Do you see yonder light?"

"Ay, marry do I," said Colonel Everard; "and what does that matter?—a light in a gar-

ret-room of such an old mansion as Woodstock is no subject for wonder, I trow."

"But a light from Rosamond's Tower is surely so," said the Mayor.

"True," said the Colonel, something surprised, when, after a careful examination, he satisfied himself that the worthy magistrate's conjecture was real. "That is indeed Rosamond's Tower; and as the drawbridge by which it was accessible has been destroyed for centuries, it is hard to say what chance could have lighted a lamp in such an inaccessible place."

"That light burns with no earthly fuel," said the Mayor; "neither from whale nor olive, nor bees-wax, nor mutton-suet either. I dealt in these commodities, Colonel, before I went into my present line; and I can assure you I could distinguish the sort of light they give, one from another, at a greater distance than yonder turret —Look you, that is no earthly flame.—See you not something blue and reddish upon the edges? —that bodes full well where it comes from.—Colonel, in my opinion we had better go back to sup at the town, and leave the Devil and the

red-coats to settle their matters together for to-night; and then when we come back the next morning, we will have a pull with the party that chances to keep a-field."

"You will do as you please, Master Mayor," said Everard, "but my duty requires me that I should see the Commissioners to night."

"And mine requires me to see the foul Fiend," said Master Holdenough, "if he dare make himself visible to me. I wonder not that, knowing who is approaching, he betakes himself to the very citadel, the inner and the last defences of this ancient and haunted mansion. He is dainty, I warrant you, and must dwell where is a relish of luxury and murder about the walls of his chamber. In yonder turret sinned Rosamond, and in yonder turret she suffered; and there she sits, or, more likely, the Enemy in her shape, as I have heard true men of Woodstock tell.—I wait on you, good Colonel—Master Mayor will do as he pleases. The strong man hath fortified himself in his dwelling-house, but, lo, there comes another stronger than he."

"For me," said the Mayor, "who am as un-

learned as I am unwarlike, I will not engage either with the Powers of the Earth, or the Prince of the Powers of the Air, and I will go back to Woodstock;—and hark ye, good fellow," slapping Wildrake on the shoulder, "I will bestow on thee a shilling wet and a shilling dry if thou wilt go with me."

"Gadzookers, Master Mayor," said Wildrake, neither flattered by the magistrate's familiarity of address, nor captivated by his munificence—"I wonder who the devil made you and me fellows? and, besides, do you think I would go back to Woodstock with your worshipful cod's-head, when, by good management, I may get a peep of fair Rosamond, and see whether she was that choice and incomparable piece of ware which the world has been told of by rhymers and ballad-makers?"

"Speak less lightly and wantonly, friend," said the divine; "we are to resist the Devil that he may flee from us, and not to tamper with him, or enter into his counsels, or traffic with the merchandize of his great Vanity Fair."

"Mind what the good man says, Wildrake,"

said the Colonel, "and take heed another time how thou dost suffer thy wit to outrun discretion."

"I am beholden to the reverend gentleman for his advice," answered Wildrake, upon whose tongue it was difficult to impose any curb whatever, even when his own safety rendered it most desirable. "But, gadzookers, let him have had what experience he will in fighting with the Devil, he never saw one so black as I had a tussle with—not a hundred years ago."

"How, friend," said the clergyman, who understood everything literally when apparitions were mentioned, "have you had so late a visitation of Satan? Believe me, then, that I wonder why thou darest to entertain his name so often and so lightly, as I see thou dost use it in thy ordinary discourse. But when and where didst thou see the Evil One?"

Everard hastily interposed, lest, by something yet more strongly alluding to Cromwell, his imprudent squire should, in mere wantonness, betray his interview with the General. "The young man raves," he said, "of a dream which

he had the other night, when he and I slept together in Victor Lee's chamber, belonging to the ranger's apartments at the Lodge."

"Thanks for help at a pinch, good patron," said Wildrake, whispering into Everard's ear, who in vain endeavoured to shake him off,—"a fib never failed a fanatic."

"You, also, spoke something too lightly of these matters, considering the work which we have in hand, worthy Colonel," said the Presbyterian divine. "Believe me, the young man, thy servant, was more like to see visions than to dream merely idle dreams in that apartment; for I have always heard, that, next to Rosamond's Tower, in which, as I said, she played the wanton, and was afterward's poisoned by Queen Eleanor, Victor Lee's chamber was the place in the Lodge of Woodstock more peculiarly the haunt of evil spirits. I pray you, young man, tell me this dream or vision of yours."

"With all my heart, sir," said Wildrake—then addressing his patron, who began to interfere, he said, "Tush, sir, you have had the discourse for an hour, and why should not I hold

forth in my turn? By this darkness, if you keep me silent any longer I will turn Independent preacher, and stand up in your despite for the freedom of private judgment.—And so, reverend sir, I was dreaming of a carnal divertisement called a bull-baiting; and methought there were venturing dogs at head, as merrily as e'er I saw them at Tutbury-Bull-running; and methought I heard some one say, there was the Devil come to have a sight of the bull-ring. Well, I thought that, gadswoons, I would have a peep at his Infernal Majesty. So I looked, and there was a butcher in greasy woollen, with his steel by his side; but he was none of the Devil. And there was a drunken cavalier, with his mouth full of oaths, and his stomach full of emptiness, and a gold-laced waistcoat in a very dilapidated condition, and a ragged hat, with a piece of a feather in it; and he was none of the Devil neither. And here was a miller, his hands dusty with meal, and every atom of it stolen: and there was a vintner, his green apron stained with wine, and every drop of it sophisticated; but neither was the old gentleman I looked for to be detected among those

artizans of iniquity. At length, sir, I saw a grave person with cropped hair, a pair of longish and projecting ears, a band as broad as a slobbering bib under his chin, a brown coat surmounted by a Geneva cloak, and I had old Nicholas at once in his genuine paraphernalia, by ——."

"Shame, shame!" said Colonel Everard. "What! behave thus to an old gentleman and a divine!"—

"Nay, let him proceed," said the minister, with perfect equanimity, "if thy friend, or secretary, is gibing, I must have less patience than becomes my profession, if I could not bear an idle jest, and forgive him who makes it. Or if, on the other hand, the Enemy has really presented himself to the young man in such a guise as he intimates, wherefore should we be surprised that he, who can take upon him the form of an angel of light, should be able to assume that of a frail and peccable mortal, whose spiritual calling and profession ought, indeed, to induce him to make his life an example to others; but whose conduct, nevertheless, such is the imperfection of

our unassisted nature, sometimes rather presents us with a warning of what we should shun?"

"Now, by the mass, honest dominie—I mean reverend sir—I crave you a thousand pardons," said Wildrake, penetrated by the quietness and patience of the presbyter's rebuke. "By St George, if quiet patience will do it, thou art fit to play a game at foils with the Devil himself, and I would be contented to hold stakes."

As he concluded an apology, which was certainly not uncalled for, and seemed to be received in perfectly good part, they approached so close to the exterior door of the Lodge, that they were challenged with the emphatic *Stand*, by a sentinel who mounted guard there. Colonel Everard replied, *A friend;* and the sentinel repeating his command, "Stand, friend," proceeded to call the corporal of the guard. The corporal came forth, and at the same time turned out his guard. Colonel Everard gave his name and designation, as well as those of his companions, on which the corporal said, "he doubted not there would be orders for his instant admission; but, in the first place, Mr Tomkins

must be consulted, that he might learn their honours' mind."

"How, sir!" said the Colonel, "do you, knowing who I am, presume to keep me on the outside of your post?"

"Not, if your honour pleases to enter," said the corporal, "and undertakes to be my warranty; but such are the orders of my post."

"Nay, then, do your duty," said the Colonel; "but are the cavaliers up, or what is the matter, that you keep so close and strict a watch?"

The fellow gave no distinct answer, but muttered between his moustaches something about the Enemy, and the roaring Lion who goeth about seeking what he may devour. Presently afterwards Tomkins appeared, followed by two servants bearing lights in great standing brass candlesticks. They marched before Colonel Everard and his party, keeping as close to each other as two cloves of the same orange, and starting from time to time, and shouldering as they passed through sundry intricate passages, they led up a large and ample wooden staircase, the banisters, rail, and lining of which were executed

in black oak, and finally into a long saloon, or parlour, where there was a prodigious fire, and about twelve candles of the largest size distributed in sconces against the wall. There were seated the Commissioners, who now held in their power the ancient mansion and royal domain of Woodstock.

CHAPTER XI.

The bloody bear, an independent beast,
Unlick'd to forms, in groans he had express'd—
. . . .
Next him the buffoon ape, as atheists use,
Mimick'd all sects, and had his own to choose.
Hind and Panther.

THE strong light in the parlour which we have described, served to enable Everard easily to recognise his acquaintances, Desborough, Harrison, and Bletson, who had assembled themselves round an oak table of large dimensions, placed near the blazing chimney, on which were arranged wine, and ale, and materials for smoking, then the general indulgence of the time. There was a species of movable cupboard set betwixt the table and the door, calculated originally for a display of plate upon grand occasions, but at present only used as a screen; which purpose it served so effec-

tually, that, ere he had coasted around it, Everard heard the following fragment of what Desborough was saying, in his coarse strong voice:—"Sent him to share with us, I'se warrant ye—It was always his Excellency my brother-in-law's way—if he made a treat for five friends, he would invite more than the table could hold—I have known him ask three men to eat two eggs."

"Hush, hush," said Bletson; and the servants making their appearance from behind the tall cupboard, announced Colonel Everard. It may not be unpleasing to the reader to have a description of the party into which he now entered.

Desborough was a stout, bull-necked man, of middle size, with heavy vulgar features, grizzled bushy eyebrows, and wall-eyes. The flourish of his powerful relative's fortunes, had burst forth in the finery of his dress, which was much more ornamented than was usual among the roundheads. There was embroidery on his cloak, and lace upon his band; his hat displayed a feather with a golden clasp, and all his habiliments were those of a cavalier, or follower of the court, rather than the plain dress of a parliamentarian officer.

But, Heaven knows, there was little of court-like grace or dignity in the person or demeanour of the individual, who became his fine suit as the hog on the sign-post does his gilded armour. It was not that he was positively deformed, or misshaped, for, taken in detail, the figure was well enough. But his limbs seemed to act upon different and contradictory principles. They were not, as the play says, in a concatenation accordingly;—the right hand moved as if it were upon bad terms with the left, and the legs showed an inclination to foot it in different and opposite directions. In short, to use an extravagant comparison, the members of Colonel Desborough seemed rather to resemble the disputatious representatives of a federative congress, than the well-ordered union of the orders of the state, in a firm and well-compacted monarchy, where each holds his own place, and all obey the dictates of a common head.

General Harrison, the second of the Commissioners, was a tall, thin, middle-aged man, who had risen into his high situation in the army, and his intimacy with Cromwell, by his dauntless

courage in the field, and the popularity he had acquired by his exalted enthusiasm amongst the military saints, sectaries, and independents, who composed the strength of the existing army. Harrison was of mean extraction, and bred up to his father's employment of a butcher. Nevertheless, his appearance, though coarse, was not vulgar, like that of Desborough, who had so much the advantage of him in birth and education. He had, as we have said, a masculine height and strength of figure, was well made, and in his manner announced a rough military character, which might be feared, but could not be the object of contempt or ridicule. His aquiline nose and dark black eyes set off to some advantage a countenance otherwise irregular, and the wild enthusiasm that sometimes sparkled in them as he dilated on his opinions to others, and often seemed to slumber under his long dark eye-lashes as he mused upon them himself, gave something strikingly wild, and even noble, to his aspect. He was one of the chief leaders of those who were called Fifth-Monarchy men, who, going even beyond the usual fanaticism of the age, presumptuously interpreted the

Book of the Revelations after their own fancies, considered that the second Advent of the Messiah, and the Millenium, or reign of the Saints upon earth, was close at hand, and that they themselves, illuminated, as they believed, with the power of foreseeing these approaching events, were the choice instruments for the establishment of the New Reign, or Fifth Monarchy, as it was called, and were fated also to win its honours, whether celestial or terrestrial.

When this spirit of enthusiasm, which operated like a partial insanity, was not immediately affecting Harrison's mind, he was a shrewd worldly man, and a good soldier; one who missed no opportunity of mending his fortune, and who, in expecting the exaltation of the Fifth Monarchy, was, in the meanwhile, a ready instrument for the establishment of the Lord General's supremacy. Whether it was owing to his early occupation, and habits of indifference to pain or bloodshed, to natural disposition and want of feeling, or, finally, to the awakened character of his enthusiasm, which made him look upon those who opposed him, as opposing the Divine will, and therefore

meriting no favour or mercy, is not easy to say. But all agreed, that after a victory, or the successful storm of a town, Harrison was one of the most cruel and pitiless men in Cromwell's army; always urging some misapplied text to authorize the continued execution of the fugitives, and sometimes even putting to death those who had surrendered themselves prisoners. It was said, that at times the recollection of some of those cruelties troubled his conscience, and disturbed the dreams of beatification in which his imagination indulged.

When Everard entered the apartment, this true representative of the fanatical soldiers of the day, who filled those ranks and regiments which Cromwell had politically kept on foot, while he procured the reduction of those in which the Presbyterian interest predominated, was seated a little apart from the others, his legs crossed, and stretched out at length towards the fire, his head resting on his elbow, and turned upwards, as if studying, with the most profound gravity, the half-seen carving of the Gothic roof.

Bletson remains to be mentioned, who, in person and figure, was diametrically different from

the other two. There was neither foppery nor slovenliness in his exterior, nor had he any marks of military service or rank about his person. A small walking rapier seemed merely worn as a badge of his rank as a gentleman, without his hand having the least purpose of becoming acquainted with the hilt, or his eye with the blade. His countenance was thin and acute, marked with lines which thought rather than age had traced upon it; and a habitual sneer on his countenance, even when he least wished to express contempt on his features, seemed to assure the person addressed, that in Bletson he conversed with a person of intellect far superior to his own. This was a triumph of intellect only, for on all occasions of difference respecting speculative opinions, and indeed on all controversies whatsoever, Bletson avoided the ultimate *ratio* of blows and knocks.

Yet this peaceful gentleman had found himself obliged to serve personally in the Parliamentary army at the commencement of the Civil War, till happening unluckily to come in contact with the fiery Prince Rupert, his retreat was judged so precipitate, that it required all the shelter his

friends could afford, to keep him free of an impeachment or a court-martial. But as Bletson spoke well, and with great effect, in the House of Commons, which was his natural sphere, and was on that account high in the estimation of his party, his behaviour at Edgehill was passed over, and he continued to take an active share in all the political events of that bustling period, though he faced not again the actual front of war.

Bletson's theoretical principles of politics had long inclined him to espouse the opinions of Harrison and others, who adopted the visionary idea of establishing a pure democratical republic in so extensive a country as Britain. This was a rash theory, where there is such an infinite difference betwixt ranks, habits, education, and morals —where there is such an immense disproportion betwixt the wealth of individuals—and where a large proportion of the inhabitants consists of the inferior classes of the large towns and manufacturing districts—men unfitted to bear that share in the direction of a state, which must be exercised by the members of a republic in the proper sense of the word. Accordingly, so soon as

the experiment was made, it became obvious that no such form of government could be adopted with the smallest chance of stability; and the question came only to be, whether the remnant, or, as it was vulgarly called, the Rump of the Long Parliament, now reduced by the seclusion of so many of the members to a few scores of persons, should continue, in spite of their unpopularity, to rule the affairs of Britain? Whether they should cast all loose by dissolving themselves, and issuing writs to convoke a new Parliament, the composition of which no one could answer for, any more than for the measures they might take when assembled? Or lastly, Whether Cromwell, as actually happened, was not to throw the sword into the balance, and boldly possess himself of that power which the remnant of the Parliament were unable to hold, and yet afraid to resign?

Such being the state of parties, the Council of State, in distributing the good things in their gift, endeavoured to soothe and gratify the army, as a beggar flings crusts to a growling mastiff. In this view Desborough had been created a Commissioner in the Woodstock matter to gra-

tify Cromwell, Harrison to soothe the fierce Fifth-Monarchy men, and Bletson as a sincere republican, and one of their own leaven.

But if they supposed Bletson had the least intention of becoming a martyr to his republicanism, or submitting to any serious loss on account of it, they much mistook the man. He entertained their principles sincerely, and not the less that they were found impracticable; for the miscarriage of his experiment no more converts the political speculator, than the explosion of a retort undeceives an alchemist. But Bletson was quite prepared to submit to Cromwell, or any one else who might be possessed of the actual authority. He was a ready subject in practice to the powers existing, and made little difference betwixt various kinds of government, holding in theory all to be nearly equal in imperfection, so soon as they diverged from the model of Harrington's Oceana. Cromwell had already been tampering with him, like wax between his finger and thumb, and which he was ready shortly to seal with, smiling at the same time to himself when he beheld the Council of State giving rewards to Bletson as their faithful adherent, while

he himself was secure of his allegiance, how soon soever the expected change of government should take place.

But Bletson was still more attached to his metaphysical than his political creed, and carried his doctrines of the perfectibility of mankind as far as he did those respecting the conceivable perfection of a model of government; and as in the one case he declared against all power which did not emanate from the people themselves, so, in his moral speculations, he was unwilling to refer any of the phenomena of nature to a final cause. When pushed, indeed, very hard, Bletson was compelled to mutter some inarticulate and unintelligible doctrines concerning an *Animus Mundi*, or Creative Power in the works of Nature, by which she originally called into existence, and still continues to preserve, her works. To this power, he said, some of the purest metaphysicians rendered a certain degree of homage; nor was he himself inclined absolutely to censure those, who, by institution of holidays, choral dances, songs, and harmless feasts and libations, might be disposed to celebrate the great goddess Nature; at least dancing, singing, feasting, and

sporting, being comfortable things to both young and old, they might as well sport, dance and feast, in honour of such appointed holidays, as under any other pretext. But then this moderate show of religion was to be practised under such exceptions as are admitted by the Highgate oath; and no one was to be compelled to dance, drink, sing, or feast, whose taste did not happen to incline them to such divertisements; nor was any one to be compelled to worship the creative power, whether under the name of the *Animus Mundi*, or any other whatsoever. The interference of the Deity in the affairs of mankind he entirely disowned, having proved to his own satisfaction that the idea originated entirely in priestcraft. In short, with the shadowy metaphysical exception aforesaid, Mr Joshua Bletson of Darlington, member for Littlecreed, came as near the predicament of an atheist, as it is perhaps possible for a man to do. But we say this with the necessary salvo; for we have known many like Bletson, whose curtains have been shrewdly shaken by superstition, though their fears were unsanctioned by any religious faith. The devils, we are assured, believe and tremble;

but on earth there are many, who, in worse plight than even the natural children of perdition, tremble without believing, and fear even while they blaspheme.

It follows, of course, that nothing could be treated with more scorn by Mr Bletson, than the debates about Prelacy and Presbytery, about Presbytery and Independency, about Quakers and Anabaptists, Muggletonians and Brownists, and all the various sects by which the Civil War had commenced, and by which its dissensions were still continued. "It was," he said, "as if beasts of burthen should quarrel amongst themselves about the fashion of their halters and pack-saddles, instead of embracing a favourable opportunity of throwing them aside." Other witty and pithy remarks he used to make when time and place suited; for instance, at the club called the Rota, frequented by Saint John, and established by Harrington for the free discussion of political and religious subjects.

But when Bletson was out of this academy, or stronghold of philosophy, he was very cautious how he carried his contempt of the general prejudice in favour of religion and Christianity further than

an implied objection or a sneer. If he had an opportunity of talking in private with an ingenuous and intelligent youth, he sometimes attempted to make a proselyte, and showed much address in bribing the vanity of inexperience, by suggesting that a mind like his ought to spurn the prejudices impressed upon it in childhood; and when assuming the *latus clavus* of reason, assuring him that such as he, laying aside the *bulla* of juvenile incapacity, as Bletson called it, should proceed to examine and decide for himself. It frequently happened, that the youth was induced to adopt the doctrines in whole, or in part, of the sage who had seen his natural genius, and who had urged him to exert it in examining, detecting, and declaring for himself; and thus flattery gave proselytes to infidelity, which could not have been gained by all the powerful eloquence, or artful sophistry, of the infidel.

These attempts to extend the influence of what was called free-thinking and philosophy, were carried on, as we have hinted, with a caution dictated by the timidity of the philosopher's disposition. He was conscious his doctrines were

suspected, and his proceedings watched, by the two principal sects of Prelatists and Presbyterians, who, however inimical to each other, were still more hostile to one who was an opponent, not only to a church establishment of any kind, but to every denomination of Christianity. He found it more easy to shroud himself among the Independents, whose demands were for a general liberty of conscience, or an unlimited toleration, and whose faith, differing in all respects and particulars, was by some pushed into such wild errors, as to get totally beyond the bounds of every species of Christianity, and approach very near to infidelity itself, as extremes of each kind are said to approach each other. Bletson mixed a good deal among those sectaries: and such was his confidence in his own logic and address, that he is supposed to have entertained hopes of bringing to his opinions in time the enthusiastic Vane, as well as the no less enthusiastic Harrison, providing he could but get them to resign their visions of a Fifth Monarchy, and induce them to be contented with a reign of Philosophers in England for the natural period of their lives, instead of the reign of the Saints during the Millenium.

Such was the singular group into which Everard was now introduced; showing, in their various opinions, upon how many devious coasts human nature may make shipwreck, when she has once let go her hold on the anchor which religion has given her to lean upon; the acute self-conceit and worldly learning of Bletson—the rash and ignorant conclusions of the fierce and under-bred Harrison, leading them into the opposite extremes of enthusiasm and infidelity, while Desborough, constitutionally stupid, thought nothing about religion at all; and while the others were active in making sail on different but equally erroneous courses, he might be said to perish like a vessel, which springs a leak and founders in the roadstead. It was wonderful to behold what a strange variety of mistakes and errors, on the part of the King and his Ministers, on the part of the Parliament and their leaders, on the part of the allied kingdoms of Scotland and England towards each other, had combined to rear up men of such dangerous opinions and interested characters among the arbiters of the destiny of Britain.

Those who argue for party's sake, will see all the

faults on the one side, without deigning to look at those on the other; those who study history for instruction, will perceive that nothing but the want of concession on either side, and the deadly height to which the animosity of the King's and Parliament's parties had arisen, could have so totally overthrown the well-poised balance of the English constitution. But we hasten to quit political reflections, the rather that ours, we believe, will please neither Whig nor Tory.

CHAPTER XII.

Three form a College—an you give us four,
Let him bring his share with him.
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

MR BLETSON arose, and paid his respects to Colonel Everard, with the ease and courtesy of a gentleman of the time; though on every account grieved at his intrusion, as a religious man who held his free-thinking principles in detestation, and would effectually prevent his conversion of Harrison, and even of Desborough, if anything could be moulded out of such a clod to the worship of the *Animus Mundi.* Moreover, Bletson knew Everard to be a man of steady probity, and by no means disposed to close with a scheme on which he had successfully sounded the other two, and which was calculated to assure the Commissioners

of some little private indemnification for the trouble they were to give themselves in the public business. The philosopher was yet less pleased when he saw the magistrate and the pastor who had met him in his flight of the preceding evening, when he had been seen, *parma non bene relicta*, with cloak and doublet left behind him.

The presence of Colonel Everard was as unpleasing to Desborough as to Bletson; but the former having no philosophy in him, nor an idea that it was possible for any man to resist helping himself out of untold money, was chiefly embarrassed by the thought, that the plunder which they might be able to achieve out of their trust, might, by this unwelcome addition to their number, be divided into four parts instead of three; and this reflection added to the natural awkwardness with which he grumbled forth a sort of welcome, addressed to Everard.

As for Harrison, he remained like one on higher thoughts intent; his posture unmoved, his eyes fixed on the ceiling as before, and no part of him indicated the least consciousness that the company had been more than doubled around him.

Meantime, Everard took his place at the table, as a man who assumed his own right, and pointed to his companions to sit down nearer the foot of the board. Wildrake so far misunderstood his signals, as to sit down above the Mayor; but, rallying his recollection at a look from his patron, he rose and took his place lower, whistling, however, as he went, a sound at which the company stared, as at a freedom highly unbecoming. To complete his indecorum, he seized upon a pipe, and filling it from a large tobacco-box, was soon immersed in a cloud of his own raising; from which a hand shortly after emerged, seized on the black-jack of ale, withdrew it within the vapoury sanctuary, and, after a potential draught, replaced it upon the table, its owner beginning to renew the cloud which his intermitted exercise of the tube had almost allowed to subside.

Nobody made any observation on his conduct, out of respect, probably, to Colonel Everard, who bit his lip, but continued silent; aware that censure might extract something more unequivocally cha-

racteristic of a cavalier, from his refractory companion. As silence seemed too awkward, and the others made no advances to break it, beyond the ordinary salutation, Colonel Everard at length said, "I presume, gentlemen, that you are somewhat surprised at my arrival here, and thus intruding myself into your meeting."

"Why the dickens should we be surprised, Colonel?" said Desborough; "we know his Excellency, my brother-in-law Noll's—I mean my Lord Cromwell's way, of over-quartering his men in the towns he marches through. Thou hast obtained a share in our commission?"

"And in that," said Bletson, smiling and bowing, "the Lord-General has given us the most acceptable colleague that could have been added to our number. No doubt your authority for joining with us must be under warrant of the Council of State?"

"Of that, gentlemen," said the Colonel, "I will presently advise you."—He took out his warrant accordingly, and was about to communicate the contents; but observing that there were three or four half-empty flasks upon the table,

that Desborough looked more stupid than usual, and that the philosopher's eyes were reeling in his head, notwithstanding the temperance of Bletson's usual habits, he concluded that they had been fortifying themselves against the horrors of the haunted mansion, by laying in a store of what is called Dutch courage, and therefore prudently resolved to postpone his more important business with them till the cooler hour of morning. He therefore, instead of presenting the General's warrant superseding their commission, contented himself with replying,—" My business has, of course, some reference to your proceedings here. But here is—excuse my curiosity—a reverend gentleman," pointing to Holdenough, " who has told me that you are so strangely embarrassed here, as to require both the civil and spiritual authority to enable you to keep possession of Woodstock."

" Before we go into that matter," said Bletson, blushing up to the eyes at the recollection of his own fears, so manifestly displayed, yet so inconsistent with his principles, " I should like to know who this other stranger is, who has come with the

worthy magistrate, and the no less worthy Presbyterian."

"Meaning me?" said Wildrake, laying his pipe aside; "Gadzooks, the time hath been that I could have answered the question with a better title; but at present I am only his honour's poor clerk, or secretary, whichever is the current phrase."

"'Fore George, my lively blade, thou art a frank fellow of thy tattle," said Desborough. "There is my secretary Tomkins, whom men sillily enough call Fibbet, and the honourable Lieutenant-General Harrison's secretary Bibbet, who are now at supper below stairs, that durst not for their ears speak a phrase above their breath in the presence of their betters, unless to answer a question."

"Yes, Colonel Everard," said the philosopher with his quiet smile, glad, apparently, to divert the conversation from the topic of last night's alarm, and recollections which humbled his self-love and self-satisfaction,—"yes; and when Master Fibbet and Master Bibbet *do* speak, their affirmations are as much in a common mould of mutual attestation, as their names would accord in the

verses of a poet. If Master Fibbet happens to tell a fiction, Master Bibbet swears it as truth. If Master Bibbet chances to have gotten drunk in the fear of the Lord, Master Fibbet swears he is sober. I have called my own secretary Gibbet, though his name chances to be only Gibeon, a worthy Israelite at your service, but as pure a youth as ever picked a lamb-bone at Paschal. But I call him Gibbet, merely to make up the holy trefoil with another rhyme. This squire of thine, Colonel Everard, looks as if he might be worthy to be coupled with the rest of the fraternity."

"Not I, truly," said the cavalier; "I'll be coupled with no Jew that was ever whelped, and no Jewess neither."

"Scorn not for that, young man," said the philosopher; "the Jews are, in point of religion, the elder brethren, you know."

"The Jews older than the Christians?" said Desborough; "'fore George, they will have thee before the General Assembly, Bletson, if thou venturest to say so."

Wildrake laughed without ceremony at the gross ignorance of Desborough, and was joined by

a sniggling response from behind the cupboard, which, when inquired into, proved to be produced by the serving-men. These worthies, timorous as their betters, when they had set down the lights, and were supposed to have left the room, had only absconded behind their present place of concealment.

"How now, ye rogues," said Bletson, angrily; "do you not know your duty better?"

"We beg your worthy honour's pardon," said one of the men, "but we had set the candlesticks down on the table, and truly we dared not go down stairs till we should get a light."

"A light, ye cowardly poltroons?" said the philosopher, "what—to show which of you looks palest when a rat squeaks?—but take a candlestick and begone, you cowardly villains! the devils you are so much afraid of must be but paltry kites, if they hawk at such bats as you are."

The servants, without replying, took up one of the candlesticks, and prepared to retreat, Trusty Tomkins at the head of the troop, when suddenly, as they arrived at the door of the parlour, which had been left half open, it was shut violently.

The three terrified domestics tumbled back into the middle of the room, as if a shot had been discharged in their face, and all who were at the table started to their feet.

Colonel Everard was incapable of a moment's fear, even if anything frightful had been seen; but he remained stationary, to see what his companions would do, and to get at the bottom, if possible, of the cause of their alarm upon an occasion so trifling. The philosopher seemed to think that *he* was the person chiefly concerned to show manhood on the occasion.

He walked to the door accordingly, murmuring at the cowardice of the servants; but at such a snail's pace, that it seemed he would most willingly have been anticipated by any one whom his reproaches had roused to exertion. "Cowardly blockheads!" he said at last, seizing hold of the handle of the door, but without turning it effectually round—"dare you not open a door?"—(still fumbling with the lock)—"dare you not go down a staircase without a light? Here, bring me the candle, you cowardly villains!—By heaven, something sighs on the outside!"

As he spoke, he let go the handle of the parlour door, and stepped back a pace or two into the apartment, with cheeks as pale as the band he wore.

"*Deus adjutor meus!*" said the Presbyterian clergyman, rising from his seat. "Give place, sir," addressing Bletson; "it would seem I know more of this matter than thou, and I bless Heaven I am armed for the conflict."

Bold as a grenadier about to mount a breach, yet with the same belief in the existence of a great danger to be encountered, as well as the same reliance in the goodness of his cause, the worthy man stepped before the philosophical Bletson, and taking a light from a sconce in one hand, quietly opened the door with the other, and standing in the threshold, said, "Here is nothing!"

"And who expected to see anything," said Bletson, "excepting those terrified oafs, who take fright at every puff of wind that whistles through the passages of this old dungeon?"

"Mark you, Master Tomkins," said one of the waiting-men in a whisper to the steward,—"See how boldly the minister pressed forward before

all of them. Ah! Master Tomkins, our parson is the real commissioned officer of the church—your lay-preachers are no better than a parcel of club-men and volunteers."

"Follow me those who list," said Master Holdenough, "or go before me those who choose, I will walk through the habitable places of this house before I leave it, and satisfy myself whether Satan hath really mingled himself among these dreary dens of ancient wickedness, or whether, like the wicked of whom holy David speaketh, we are afraid, and flee when no one pursueth."

Harrison, who had heard these words, sprung from his seat, and drawing his sword, exclaimed, "Were there as many fiends in the house as there are hairs on my head, upon this cause I will charge them up to their very trenches!"

So saying, he brandished his weapon, and pressed to the head of the column, where he moved side by side with the minister. The Mayor of Woodstock next joined the body, thinking himself safer perhaps in the company of his pastor; and the whole train moved forward in close order, accompanied by the servants bearing lights, to search

the Lodge for some cause of that panic with which they seemed to be suddenly seized.

"Nay, take me with you, my friends," said Colonel Everard, who had looked on in surprise, and was now about to follow the party, when Bletson laid hold on his cloak, and begged him to remain.

"You see, my good Colonel," he said, affecting a courage which his shaking voice belied, "here are only you and I, and honest Desborough, left behind in garrison, while all the others are absent on a sally. We must not hazard the whole troops in one sortie—that were unmilitary —Ha, ha, ha!"

"In the name of Heaven, what means all this?" said Everard. "I heard a foolish tale about apparitions as I came this way, and now I find you all half mad with fear, and cannot get a word of sense among so many of you. Fie, Colonel Desborough—fie, Master Bletson—try to compose yourselves, and let me know, in Heaven's name, the cause of all this disturbance. One would be apt to think your brains were turned."

"And so mine well may," said Desborough,

"ay, and overturned too, since my bed last night was turned upside down, and I was placed for ten minutes heels uppermost, and head downmost, like a bullock going to be shod."

"What means this nonsense, Master Bletson? —Desborough must have had the night-mare."

"No, faith, Colonel, the goblins, or whatever else they were, had been favourable to honest Desborough, for they reposed the whole of his person on that part of his body which—Hark, did you not hear something?—is the central point of gravity, namely his head."

"Did you see anything to alarm you?" said the Colonel.

"Nothing," said Bletson; "but we heard hellish noises, as all our people did; and I, believing little of ghosts and apparitions, concluded the cavaliers were taking us at advantage; so remembering Rainsborough's fate, I e'en jumped the window, and ran to Woodstock, to call the soldiers to the rescue of Harrison and Desborough."

"And did you not first go to see what the danger was?"

"Ah, my good friend, you forget that I laid

down my commission at the time of the self-denying ordinance. It would have been quite inconsistent with my duty as a Parliament-man, to be brawling amidst a set of ruffians, with any military authority. No—when the Parliament commanded me to sheathe my sword, Colonel, I have too much veneration for their authority, to be found again with it drawn in my hand."

"But the Parliament," said Desborough, hastily, "did not command you to use your heels when your hands could have saved a man from choking. Ods dickens! you might have stopped when you saw my bed canted heels uppermost, and me half stifled in the bed-clothes—you might, I say, have stopped and lent a hand to put it to rights, instead of jumping out of window, like a new-shorn sheep, so soon as you had run across my room."

"Nay, worshipful Master Desborough," said Bletson, winking on Everard, to show that he was playing on his thick-skulled colleague, "how could I tell your particular mode of reposing?—there are many tastes—I have known men who slept by choice on a slope or angle of forty-five."

"Yes, but did ever a man sleep standing on his head, except by miracle?" said Desborough.

"Now, as to miracles—" said the philosopher, confident in the presence of Everard, besides that an opportunity of scoffing at religion really in some degree diverted his fear—"I leave these out of the question, seeing that the evidence on such subjects seems as little qualified to carry conviction, as a horse-hair to land a leviathan."

A loud clap of thunder, or a noise as formidable, rang through the Lodge as the scoffer had ended, which struck him pale and motionless, and made Desborough throw himself on his knees, and repeat exclamations and prayers in much admired confusion.

"There must be contrivance here," exclaimed Everard; and snatching one of the candles from a sconce, he rushed out of the apartment, little heeding the entreaties of the philosopher, who, in the extremity of his distress, conjured him by the *Animus Mundi* to remain to the assistance of a distressed philosopher endangered by witches, and a Parliament-man assaulted by ruffians. As for Desborough, he only gaped like a clown in a

pantomime; and, doubtful whether to follow or stop, his natural indolence prevailed, and he sat still.

When on the landing-place of the stairs, Everard paused a moment to consider which was the best course to take. He heard the voices of men talking fast and loud, like people who wish to drown their fears, in the lower story; and aware that nothing could be discovered by those whose inquiries were conducted in a manner so noisy, he resolved to proceed in a different direction, and examine the second floor, which he had now gained.

He had known every corner, both of the inhabited and uninhabited part of the mansion, and availed himself of the candle, to traverse two or three intricate passages, which he was afraid he might not remember with sufficient accuracy. This movement conveyed him to a sort of *Oeuil-de-beuf*, an octagon vestibule, or small hall, from which various rooms opened. Amongst these doors, Everard selected that which led to a very long, narrow, and dilapidated gallery, built in the time of Henry VIII., and running along the whole south-west side of the building, communicating at

different points with the rest of the mansion. This he thought was likely to be the post occupied by those who proposed to act the sprites upon the occasion; especially as its length and shape gave him some idea that it was a spot where the bold thunder might in many ways be imitated.

Determined to ascertain the truth if possible, he placed his light on a table in the vestibule, and applied himself to open the door into the gallery. At this point he found himself strongly opposed either by a bolt drawn, or, as he rather conceived, by somebody from within resisting his attempt. He was induced to believe the latter, because the resistance slackened and was renewed, like that of human strength, instead of presenting the permanent opposition of an inanimate obstacle. Though Everard was a strong and active young man, he exhausted his strength in the vain attempt to open the door; and having paused to take breath, was about to renew his efforts with foot and shoulder, and to call at the same time for assistance, when to his surprise, on again attempting the door more gently, in order to ascertain if possible where the strength of the opposing obstacle was situated, he

found it give way to a very slight impulse, some impediment fell broken to the ground, and the door flew wide open. The gust of wind, occasioned by the sudden opening of the door, blew out the candle, and Everard was left in darkness, save where the moonshine, which the long side-row of latticed windows dimmed, could imperfectly force its way into the gallery, which lay in ghostly length before him.

The melancholy and doubtful twilight was increased by a quantity of creeping plants on the outside, which, since all had been neglected in these ancient halls, now completely overgrown, had in some instances greatly diminished, and in others almost quite choked up, the space of the lattices, extending between the heavy stone shaft-work which divided the windows, both lengthways and across. On the other side there were no windows at all, and the gallery had been once completely hung with paintings, chiefly portraits, by which that side of the apartment had been adorned. Most of the pictures had been removed, yet the empty frames of some, and the tattered remnants of others, were still visible along the extent of

the waste gallery; the look of which was so desolate, and so well adapted besides for mischief, supposing there were enemies near him, that Everard could not help pausing at the entrance, and recommending himself to God, ere, drawing his sword, he advanced into the apartment, treading as lightly as possible, and keeping in the shadow as much as he could.

Markham Everard was by no means superstitious, but he had the usual credulity of his times; and though he did not yield easily to tales of supernatural visitations, yet he could not help thinking he was in the very situation, where, if such things were ever permitted, they might be expected to take place, while his own stealthy and ill-assured pace, his drawn weapon, and extended arms, being the very attitude and action of doubt and suspicion, tended to increase in his mind the gloomy feelings of which they are the usual indications, and with which they are constantly associated. Under such unpleasant impressions, and conscious of the neighbourhood of something unfriendly, Colonel Everard had already advanced about half along the gallery, when he heard some

one sigh very near him, and a low soft voice pronounce his name.

" Here I am," he replied, while his heart beat thick and short. " Who calls on Markham Everard ?"

Another sigh was the only answer.

" Speak," said the Colonel, " whoever or whatsoever you are, and tell with what intent and purpose you are lurking in these apartments ?"

" With a better intent than yours," returned the soft voice.

" Than mine !" answered Everard in great surprise. " Who are you that dare judge of my intents ?"

" What, or who are you, Markham Everard, who wander by moonlight through these deserted halls of royalty, where none should be but those who mourn their downfall, or are sworn to avenge it ?"

" It is—and yet it cannot be," said Everard ; " yet it is, and must be. Alice Lee, the devil or you speaks. Answer me, I conjure you !—speak openly—on what dangerous scheme are you engaged ? where is your father ? why are you here

—wherefore do you run so deadly a venture?—Speak, I conjure you, Alice Lee!"

"She whom you call on is at the distance of miles from this spot. What if her Genius speaks when she is absent?—what if the soul of an ancestress of hers and yours were now addressing you?—what if——"

"Nay," answered Everard, "but what if the dearest of human beings has caught a touch of her father's enthusiasm? what if she is exposing her person to danger, her reputation to scandal, by traversing in disguise and in darkness a house filled with armed men? Speak to me, my fair cousin, in your own person. I am furnished with powers to protect my uncle, Sir Henry—to protect you too, dearest Alice, even against the consequences of this visionary and wild attempt. Speak—I see where you are, and with all my respect, I cannot submit to be thus practised upon. Trust me—trust your cousin Markham with your hand, and believe that he will die or place you in honourable safety."

As he spoke, he exercised his eyes as keenly as possible to detect where the speaker stood; and

it seemed to him, that about three yards from him there was a shadowy form, of which he could not discern even the outline, placed as it was within the deep and prolonged shadow thrown by a space of wall intervening betwixt two windows, upon that side of the room from which the light was admitted. He endeavoured to calculate, as well as he could, the distance betwixt himself and the object which he watched, under the impression, that if, by even using a slight degree of compulsion, he could detach his beloved Alice from the confederacy into which he supposed her father's zeal for the cause of royalty had engaged her, he would be rendering them both the most essential favour. He could not indeed but conclude, that however successfully the plot which he conceived to be in agitation had proceeded against the timid Bletson, the stupid Desborough, and the crazy Harrison, there was little doubt that at length their artifices must necessarily bring shame and danger on those engaged in it.

It must also be remembered, that Everard's affection to his cousin, although of the most respectful and devoted character, partook less of the dis-

tant veneration which a lover of those days entertained for the lady whom he worshipped with humble diffidence, than of the fond and familiar feelings which a brother entertains towards a younger sister, whom he thinks himself entitled to guide, advise, and even in some degree to control. So kindly and intimate had been their intercourse, that he had little more hesitation in endeavouring to arrest her progress in the dangerous course in which she seemed to be engaged, even at the risk of giving her momentary offence, than he would have had in snatching her from a torrent or conflagration, at the chance of hurting her by the violence of his grasp. All this passed through his mind in the course of a single minute; and he resolved at all events to detain her on the spot, and compel, if possible, an explanation from her.

With this purpose, Everard again conjured his cousin, in the name of Heaven, to give up this idle and dangerous mummery; and lending an accurate ear to her answer, endeavoured from the sound to calculate as nearly as possible the distance between them.

"I am not she for whom you take me," said

the voice; "and dearer regards than aught connected with her life or death, bid me warn you to keep aloof, and leave this place."

"Not till I have convinced you of your childish folly," said the Colonel, springing forward, and endeavouring to catch hold of her who spoke to him. But no female form was within his grasp. On the contrary, he was met by a shock which could come from no woman's arm, and which was rude enough to stretch him on his back on the floor. At the same time he felt the point of a sword at his throat, and his hands so completely mastered, that not the slightest defence remained to him.

"A cry for assistance," said a voice near him, but not that which he had hitherto heard, "will be stifled in your blood!—No harm is meant you—be wise, and be silent."

The fear of death, which Everard had often braved in the field of battle, became more horrible as he felt himself in the hands of unknown assassins, and totally devoid of all means of defence. The sharp point of the sword pricked his bare throat, and the foot of him who held it was upon

his breast. He felt it was to be a single thrust, and an end there would be of life, and all the feverish joys and sorrows which agitate us so strangely, and from which we are yet so reluctant to part. Large drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead—his heart throbbed, as if it would burst from its confinement in the bosom—he experienced the agony which fear imposes on the brave man, acute in proportion to that which pain inflicts when it subdues the robust and healthy.

"Cousin Alice,"—he attempted to speak, and the sword's point pressed his throat yet more closely—"Cousin, let me not be murdered in a manner so fearful!"

"I tell you," replied the voice, "that you speak to one who is not here; but your life is not aimed at, providing you swear on your faith as a Christian, and your honour as a gentleman, that you will conceal what has happened, whether from the people below, or from any other person. On this condition you may rise; and if you seek her, you will find Alice Lee at Joceline's cottage, in the forest."

"Since I may not help myself otherwise," said

Everard, " I swear, as I have a sense of religion and honour, I will say nothing of this violence, nor make any search after those who are concerned in it."

" For that we care nothing," said the voice. " Thou hast an example how well thou may'st catch mischief on thy own part ; but we are in case to defy thee. Rise, and begone !"

The foot, the sword's-point, were withdrawn, and Everard was about to start up hastily, when the voice, in the same softness of tone which distinguished it at first, said, " No haste—cold and bare steel is yet around thee. Now—now—now —(the words dying away as at a distance)—thou art free. Be secret, and be safe."

Markham Everard arose, and, in rising, embarrassed his feet with his own sword, which he had dropped when springing forward, as he supposed, to lay hold of his fair cousin. He snatched it up in haste, and as his hand clasped the hilt, his courage, which had given way under the apprehension of instant death, began to return ; he considered, with almost his usual composure, what was to be done next. Deeply affronted at the

disgrace which he had sustained, he questioned for an instant whether he ought to keep his extorted promise, or should not rather summon assistance, and make haste to discover and seize those who had been recently engaged in such violence on his person. But these persons, be they who they would, had had his life in their power—he had pledged his word in ransom of it—and what was more, he could not divest himself of the idea that his beloved Alice was a confidante at least, if not an actor, in the confederacy which had thus baffled him. This prepossession determined his conduct; for, though angry at supposing she must have been accessary to his personal ill-treatment, he could not in any event think of an instant search through the mansion, which might have committed her safety, or that of his uncle. "But I will to the hut," he said—"I will instantly to the hut, ascertain her share in this wild and dangerous confederacy, and snatch her from ruin, if it be possible."

As, under the influence of the resolution which he had formed, Everard groped his way through the gallery, and regained the vestibule, he heard

his name called by the well-known voice of Wildrake. "What—ho!—hollo!—Colonel Everard—Mark Everard—it is dark as the devil's mouth—speak—where are you?—The witches are keeping their hellish sabbath here, as I think.—Where are you?"

"Here, here!" answered Everard. "Cease your bawling. Turn to the left, and you will meet me."

Guided by his voice, Wildrake soon appeared, with a light in one hand, and his drawn sword in the other. "Where have you been?" he said—"what has detained you?—Here are Bletson and the brute Desborough, terrified out of their lives, and Harrison raving mad, because the devil will not be civil enough to rise to fight him."

"Saw or heard you nothing as you came along?" said Everard.

"Nothing," said his friend, "excepting that when I first entered this cursed ruinous labyrinth, the light was struck out of my hand, as if by a switch, which obliged me to return for another."

"I must come by a horse instantly, Wildrake, and another for thyself, if it be possible."

"We can take two of those belonging to the troopers," answered Wildrake. "But for what purpose should we run away, like rats, at this time in the evening?—Is the house falling?"

"I cannot answer you," said the Colonel, pushing forward into a room where there were some remains of furniture.

Here the cavalier took a more strict view of his person, and exclaimed in wonder, "What the devil have you been fighting with, Markham, that has bedizened you after this sorry fashion?"

"Fighting!" exclaimed Everard.

"Yes," replied his trusty attendant, "I say fighting. Look at yourself in the mirror."

He did, and saw he was covered with dust and blood. The latter proceeded from a scratch which he had received in the throat, as he struggled to extricate himself. With unaffected alarm, Wildrake undid his friend's collar, and with eager haste proceeded to examine the wound, his hands trembling, and his eyes glistening with apprehension for his benefactor's life. When, in spite of Everard's opposition, he had examined the hurt

and found it so trifling, he resumed the natural wildness of his character, perhaps the more readily that he had felt shame in departing from it, into one which expressed more of feeling than he would be thought to possess.

"If that be the devil's work, Mark," said he, "the foul fiend's claws are not nigh so formidable as they are represented; but no one shall say that your blood has been shed unrevenged, while Roger Wildrake was by your side. Where left you this same imp? I will back to the field of fight, confront him with my rapier, and were his nails tenpenny nails, and his teeth as long as those of a harrow, he shall render me reason for the injury he has done you."

"Madness—madness!" exclaimed Everard; "I had this trifling hurt by a fall—a basin and towel will wipe it away. Meanwhile, if you will ever do me kindness, get the troop-horses—command them for the service of the public, in the name of his Excellency the General. I will but wash, and join you in an instant before the gate."

"Well, I will serve you, Everard, as a mute serves the Grand Signior, without knowing why

or wherefore. But will you go without seeing these people below?"

"Without seeing any one," said Everard; "lose no time, for God's sake."

He found out the non-commissioned officer, and demanded the horses in a tone of authority, to which the corporal yielded undisputed obedience, as one well aware of Colonel Everard's military rank and consequence. So all was in a minute or two ready for the expedition.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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